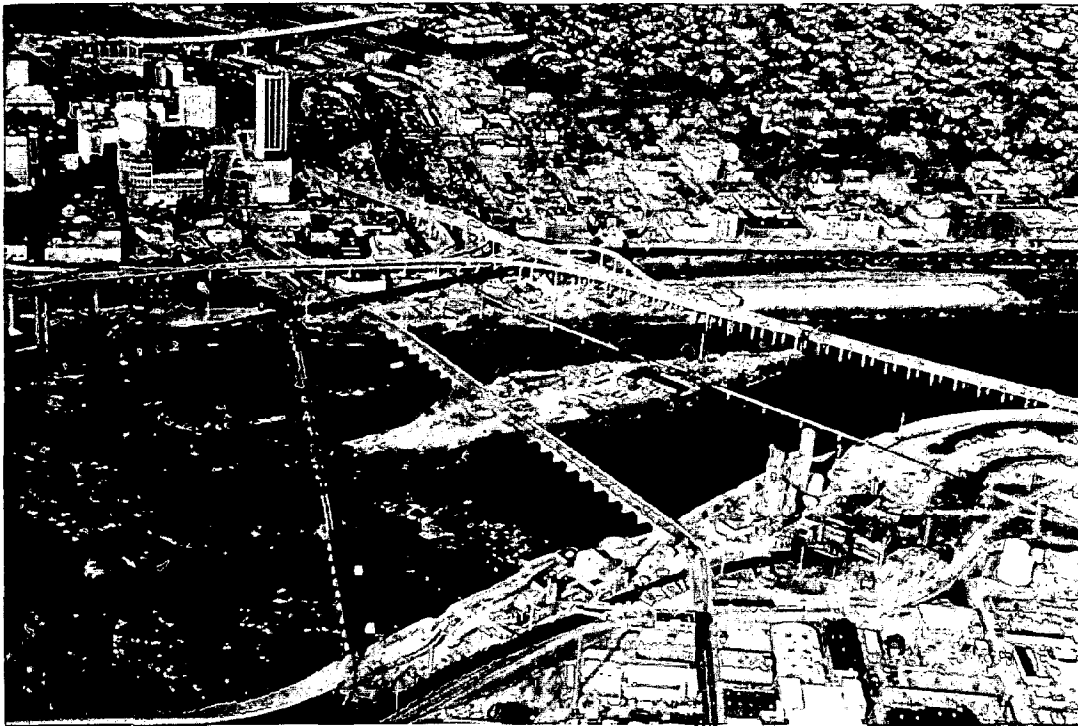


MAYO'S ISLAND



*An Evaluation of Mayo's Island
for Potential Public Access for
Recreation and Open Space Use
July, 1996*

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION

MAYO'S ISLAND

*An Evaluation of Mayo's Island
For Potential Public Access for
Recreation and Open Space Use*

This study was prepared for: **The City of Richmond
Recreation and Parks Foundation
and
The Department of Recreation and Parks**

This study was prepared by: **JRH Associates
Richmond, Virginia
July, 1996**

This report was funded, in part, by the Department of Environmental Quality's Coastal Resources Management Program through Grant # NA47OZ0287-01 of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended. The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect views of NOAA or any of its subagencies.



Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	2
III. HOW THE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED	3
A. Initiation of the Study	3
B. Study Roles	3
C. Study Activities	4
IV. CHARACTERISTICS AND USES OF MAYO'S ISLAND	6
A. Location and Physical Characteristics	6
B. Ownership	8
C. Uses	9
1. Historic Uses	9
2. Current Uses	11
3. Proposed uses	15
D. Utilities	16
E. Significant Attributes	16
V. ROLE OF MAYO'S ISLAND IN RELATION TO CITY PLANS	24
A. Master Plan/Downtown Plan	24
1. 1994 Amended Riverfront Subdistrict Plan-Policies	24
2. 1994 Amended Riverfront Subdistrict Plan-Recommendations	26
B. Master Plan/Environmental Element	27
1. Environmental Element Recommendations	28
2. Natural Features Issue Area Objectives	29
VI. CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE ACQUISITION AND/OR DEVELOPMENT, MANAGEMENT AND USE OF MAYO'S ISLAND	31
VII. RECOMMENDATIONS	35
A. Use, Access and Other Recommendations	35
1. Landscape, Revegetate and Clean Up the Island	35
2. Provide Handicapped Access	35
3. Provide Access and Develop Pathways	35
4. Provide Fishing Access	39
5. Provide Boating Access and Develop a Boating Center	41

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
6. Develop a Restaurant on the Island	42
7. Provide for Public Safety	43
8. Maintain the Recycling Center Operation	43
9. Provide Off-Site Parking	43
10. Provide Public Transportation	44
11. Use the Island for Special Events	44
B. Potential Ways of Providing public Access	45
1. Direct Acquisition by Purchase or Donation	45
2. Land Exchange, Lease, and Joint Development	45
C. Funding Recommendations	46
VIII. CONCLUSION	48

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION

Figures

	<u>Page</u>
1. Location Map	1a
2. Falls of the James	6a
3. Mayo's Island - Locations of Structures and Concrete	11a
4. IDA Area on Mayo's Island	32a
5. Conceptual Plan	44a

Acknowledgments

The authors of this report wish to thank personnel from the City of Richmond, Recreation and Parks Foundation, The Department of Recreation and Parks, and the Department of Planning and Community Development for their assistance and input in the development of this evaluation. The authors also wish to thank personnel from The Trust for Public Land and the Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Environmental Quality for their input and assistance. Staff from the Department of Environmental Quality's Office of Chesapeake Bay and Coastal Programs Division of Intergovernmental Coordination were especially helpful in the review of the draft document.

The cover photograph was taken and provided by Charles V. Ware. Mayo's Island is depicted in the center of the photograph. Since the photograph was taken in 1992, much of the eastern side of the island has been cleared of the truck trailers and other material which appears.

JRH Associates

This study was conducted by JRH Associates. J. Robert Hicks, Jr. is the principal and owner of JRH Associates. The individuals involved in conducting the Mayo's Island evaluation and developing this report are:

J. Robert Hicks, Jr. Mr. Hicks is the former director of the Commonwealth of Virginia's Department of Conservation and Recreation and the former executive director of the Maymount Foundation. Since 1990, he has served on the City of Richmond's Strategic Planning Initiative, Richmond Tomorrow, the City's Master Plan Environmental Element and the Master Plan Steering Committee.

Paul Otto Hagenmueller. Mr. Hagenmueller specializes in the areas of strategic, future and environmental planning. In his work, he has facilitated the strategic planning efforts of organizations, helping them to develop strategic visions and the necessary steps to attain those visions. In addition, he has conducted environmental studies and provided open space and recreation planning assistance to localities. He received his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Richmond and his Masters of Forestry degree from Duke University.

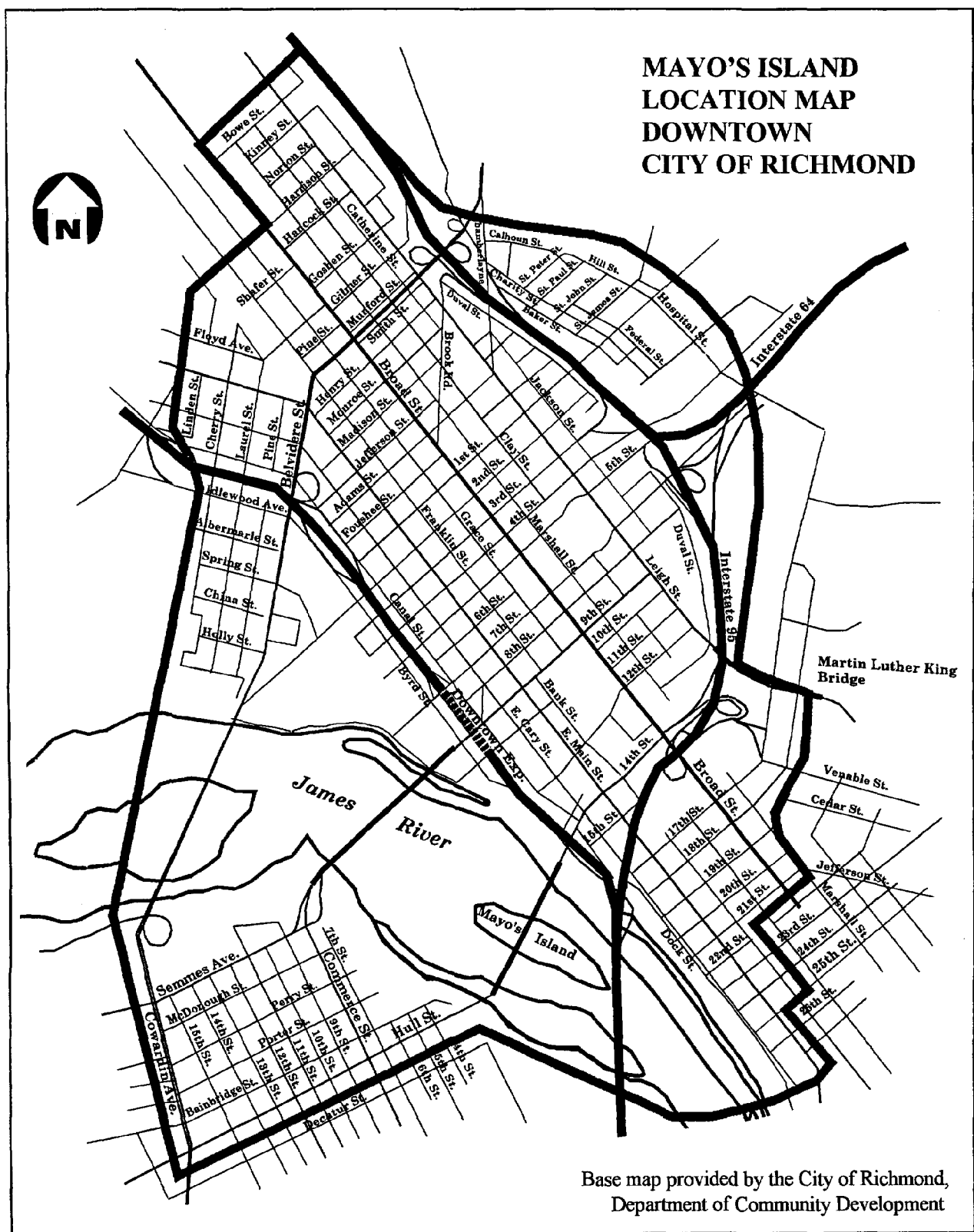
I. INTRODUCTION

This study evaluates the potential for providing public access to Mayo's Island for open space and recreation use. The study was initiated at the request of the City of Richmond's Recreation and Parks Foundation. A grant from the Department of Environmental Quality's Coastal Resources Management Program to fund the study was awarded in October 1994.

Mayo's Island has the potential to become a hub and focal point for Richmond's downtown riverfront. It is accessible from both the north and south banks of the James River by a street level bridge and from east and west by light watercraft upstream and larger boats downstream. It is the only island in the James River that sits in both fresh and brackish (tidal) waters. Because of its location at the fall line, there are opportunities for a variety of boating experiences. Fishing around the island is excellent and Mayo's Bridge (14th Street Bridge), which crosses the island, is one of the heaviest used fishing sites in the City.

Through revegetation and returning part of the island to a more natural condition, it could become an oasis connecting with green spaces on both the north and south sides of the river and the other islands in the river, downtown offices and residences in Oregon Hill, Church Hill and Old Manchester. It could be a starting and ending place for paddlers, cyclists, walkers, fishers, and people who want to get close to and enjoy nature and the river. Simultaneously, it could become a more desirable habitat for wildlife.

Over the years, Mayo's Island has been used in a variety of ways. It has been home for great blue herons, Fortune 500 company operations and after-work fishermen; a stepping stone for the evacuation of Richmond; a ball field that hosted Babe Ruth; and a place where trash has been dumped and the site of a successful recycling center. The island is natural, industrial, recreational and historic. In a sense, Mayo's Island is Richmond on the James condensed into 13 acres.



II. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study was initiated at the request of the Richmond Recreation and Parks Foundation to:

- Recommend potential recreation and open space uses for Mayo's Island, including the development of a conceptual/public access plan;
- Determine how public access to and public recreation and open space use of Mayo's Island could be achieved by the City of Richmond; and
- Identify issues related to the development and management of the island for public open space and recreation uses.

III. HOW THE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED

A. INITIATION OF THE STUDY

This study is the result of a cooperative effort between the Richmond Recreation and Parks Foundation (Foundation); the City of Richmond, Department of Recreation and Parks (DRP); the Trust for Public Land (TPL); and JRH Associates. The Foundation and DRP identified Mayo's Island as having the potential to become a valuable public open space and recreation resource.

On March 3, 1994, the City's DRP applied for a \$15,000 Virginia Coastal Resources Management Program Grant through the Department of Environmental Quality to carry out the Mayo's Island study. In its grant application, the City indicated its interest in:

- providing fishing access.
- providing boating access
- reestablishing wildlife habitat by removing some of the impervious surface and revegetating part of the island.

Grant matching funds were to be provided by the City, in the form of supplies, mapping and in-kind services of staff support and supervision; and by the TPL in the form of staff input. The grant was awarded to the City in October 1994 and administered by the Richmond Recreation and Parks Foundation, which requested and oversaw the study addressed in this report. The Foundation awarded the study development contract to JRH Associates in September 1995.

B. STUDY ROLES

- The Richmond Recreation and Parks Foundation coordinated the development and oversight of the study.
- Staff from the City's Department of Recreation and Parks and the Department of Community Development provided input, maps, staff support and meeting facilities. Additionally, the DRP was involved in assisting with the workshop.
- The Trust for Public Land provided staff input.
- JRH Associates conducted the study and prepared this report and the conceptual plan.

C. STUDY ACTIVITIES

Meetings were held between the City's DRP, the Foundation and JRH Associates to determine the scope of the study and roles and responsibilities. Meetings were also held with other City staff, TPL, and others to obtain relevant input concerning the proposal. Representatives from the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and the Department of Conservation and Recreation provided input for this evaluation. City plans were reviewed for their content and relevancy to the Mayo's Island study.

In September 1995, the consultants, JRH Associates, initiated discussions with each of the individuals or groups who were fee-simple owners of their respective portions of Mayo's Island. When the study began, two individuals owned separate parcels which constituted the fee-simple ownership of the western end of the island. The eastern side of the island was and still is owned in fee-simple by a group which is represented by one individual. The purposes of these discussions were to make these property owners aware of the study and the City's and the Foundation's interest in Mayo's Island, and to determine what plans they might have for their property. Property owners were also asked about their interest or willingness in having the Foundation acquire their property or in entering into some type of public/private partnership, for providing public recreation and open space use of their property. Property owners were involved at other times during the study process so that they would know what was happening and have opportunities to provide input.

A planning workshop concerning Mayo's Island was held on Wednesday, January 31, 1996 in the City of Richmond's Planning Conference Room in City Hall. Approximately 31 people attended all or part of this meeting including two of the fee-simple landowners, potential user groups, City representatives, a TPL representative, several business interests, a representative from the Richmond Riverfront Development Corporation, a representative from the Metro Richmond Convention and Visitors Bureau and representatives from two state agencies. Participants' input was obtained in the following areas:

- Suggestions on potential types of uses, facilities and access that they felt should be provided;
- Recommendations on what they believed was necessary, from maintenance, management, safety and other aspects, to make this a successful, long-term endeavor; and
- Ideas on how funding and non-funding support might be obtained to assist with providing public access to and/or long-term management of the Island.

All three of the fee-simple owners met with the consultants, the President of the Recreation and Parks Foundation and a representative of the Richmond Riverfront Development Corporation on February 23, 1996. The purpose of this meeting was to further advise the owners of the progress of the study and the plans for the riverfront development.

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION

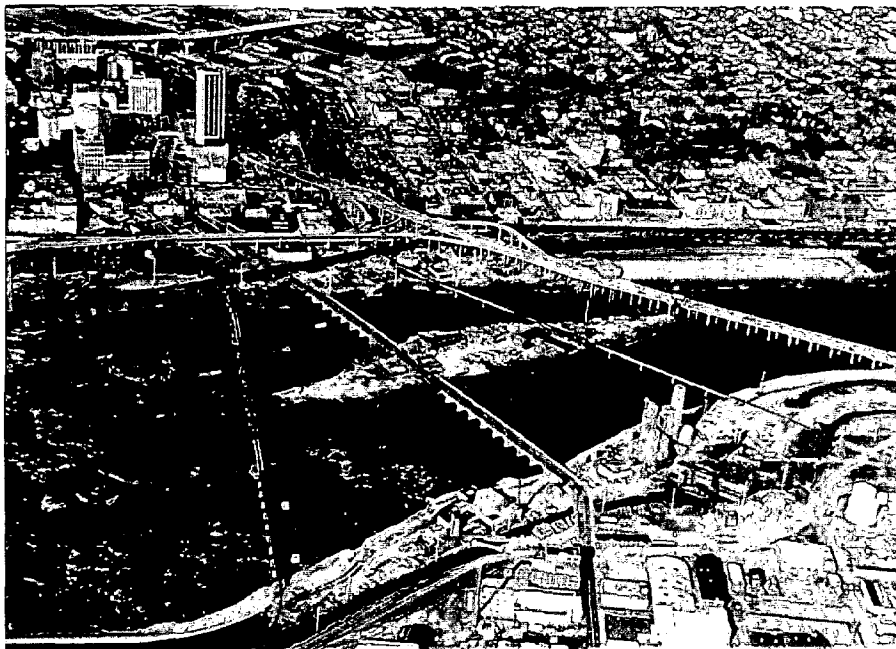
Potential uses for the island were identified through interviews with the property owners, input from the City's DRP and Foundation, review of City plans, and feedback from potential user groups, and others. The study was completed and includes recommendations for potential uses and providing access; identification of things that need to be considered in providing access and developing and managing the site; suggestions for methods of acquisition; and suggestions for steps in the process to provide access. A conceptual plan was also developed in conjunction with the recommendations and appears as Figure 5 on page 35a.

IV. CHARACTERISTICS AND USES OF MAYO'S ISLAND

A. LOCATION AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

As depicted in Figure 2, on page 6a, Mayo's Island is located in the City of Richmond in approximately the middle of the James River at the fall line (the falls of the James), where fresh water, flowing through rapids and channels around the western portion of the island, meet deeper, tidal, flat water surrounding the eastern section of the island. A number of smaller, vegetated islands are located off the western end of Mayo's Island.

Mayo's Island is the largest and most accessible of these fall line islands, which are shown in Photo No. 1. It is approximately 2,140 feet long and about 500 feet wide at its widest point. The highest elevation on the island is 29 feet above sea level. Essentially flat, the island has relatively steep banks approximately 25 feet to 28 feet high around most of its perimeter, making access to the water somewhat difficult. Photo No. 1 provides an indication of the steep banks while Photo No. 2 on page 7, shows a close-up view of a section of the island's steep banks. Exceptions to the steep bank conditions occur at the island's upstream and downstream tips, where more gentle and sloping terrain is found. Access to the water is easiest at these locations, however, there are several other locations on the north and south banks of the island's east side where access could be developed.



This aerial view of Mayo's Island was taken in 1992 and provided by Charles V. Ware. Mayo's Island is the large island, with the fringe of vegetation around its perimeter, in the center of the photograph. While the impervious surfaces seen in the photograph remain, the trailers have been removed. The vegetated, adjacent islands can be seen to the left of Mayo's Island. Four bridge crossings can also be seen and, from left to right, include: the Norfolk Southern Railway, the at-grade Mayo's Bridge, the CSX Railway, and nearby Interstate 95.

Photo 1

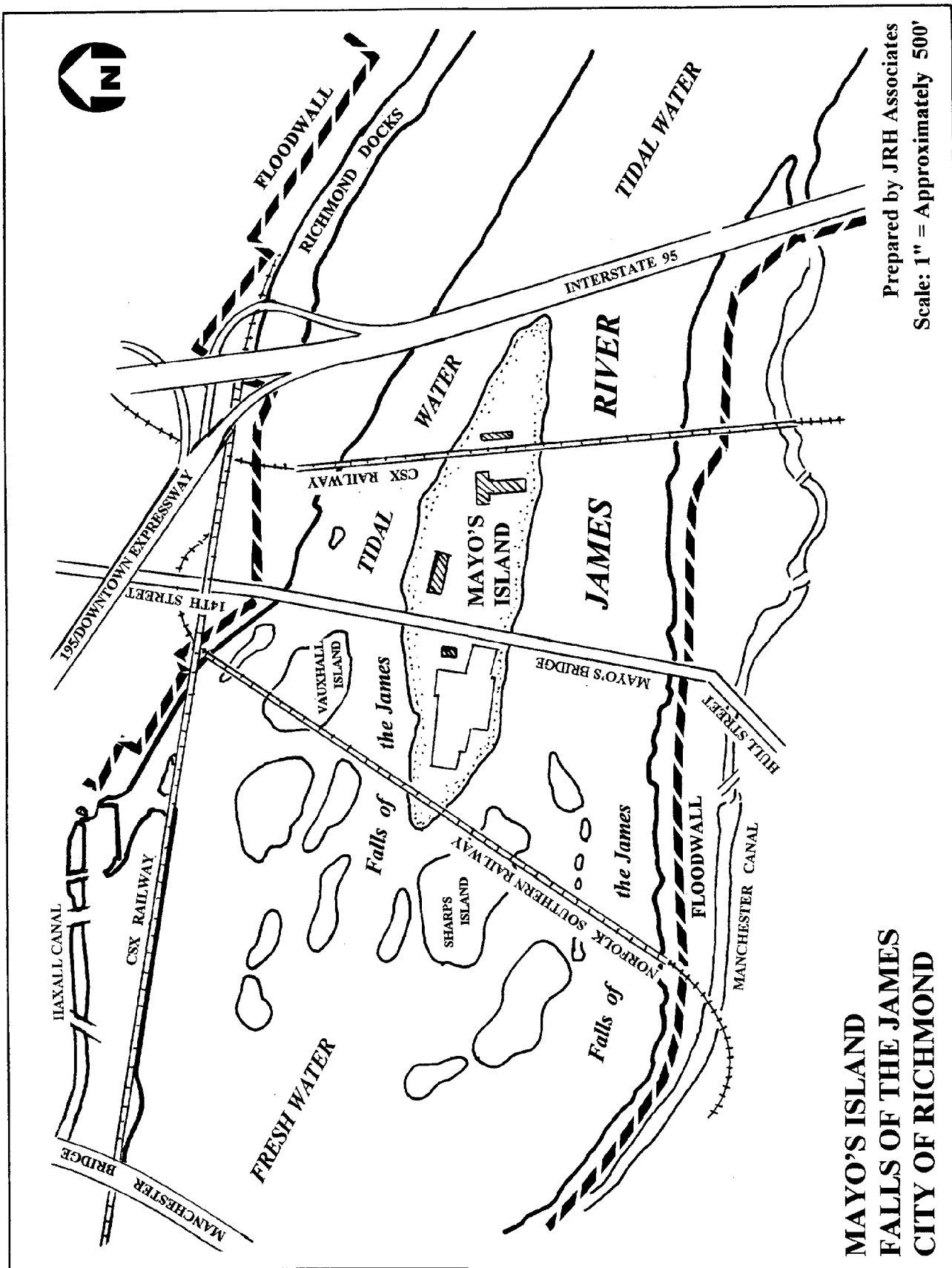


Figure 2

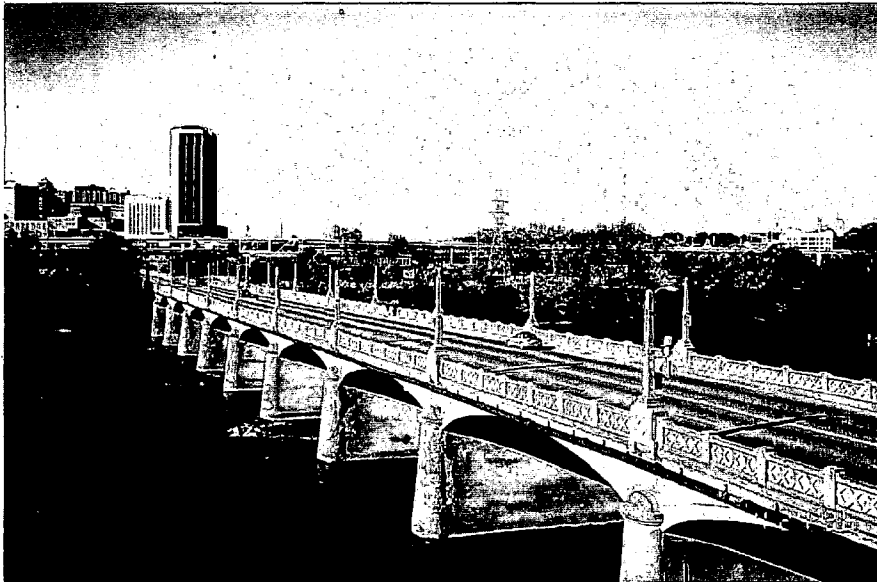
MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION



This photograph shows a portion of Mayo's Island's steep, vegetated banks. The James River can be seen in the lower right of the photograph while the top of the bank appears on the left. The banks are approximately 25 to 28 feet high.

Photo 2

Mayo's Island is crossed by Mayo's (14th Street) Bridge, two railway lines and two power lines owned by Virginia Power. For the purposes of this study, the Mayo's or 14th Street Bridge will be referred to as Mayo's Bridge and is shown in Photo No 3.



Mayo's Bridge is a gateway between Downtown to the north of the river and Manchester to the south. In this view of Mayo's Bridge, north is in the upper left of the photograph and Mayo's Island is the vegetated mass at the north end of the bridge section. In the picture, one can see the bridge's vertical light standards and the sidewalk parallel to the northbound traffic lane. Downtown office buildings can be seen in the center left of the photograph.

Photo 3

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION

About one-third, or 4.75 acres, of the island's total of approximately 13.62 acres are located west of Mayo's Bridge while 8.87 acres, are located east of the bridge. When reference is made in this study to the western portion of Mayo's Island, it refers to that portion of the island west of Mayo's Bridge (14th Street) while reference to the eastern section of the island refers to the section of the island east of Mayo's Bridge (14th Street). Mayo's Bridge is lighted, has a sidewalk on both sides and provides access to the island for pedestrians, cyclists and motorized vehicles. A Norfolk Southern rail line crosses the island near its western tip. The other rail line, crossing the eastern side of the island, belongs to CSX Corporation. Interstate 95 passes near the island's eastern tip. These transportation crossings are depicted in Figure 2 and Photo No. 1.

A large portion of Mayo's Island's surface is impervious which impedes plant growth and increases runoff. Much of the island's western side is impervious because of the presence of an almost two acre concrete pad and other concrete parking surfaces. Pervious surfaces on the west side are restricted to the banks and western tip. On the eastern side of the island, another large area of concrete is present between two buildings and other areas are heavily compacted.

Existing vegetation is sparse on the eastern side of the Island, confined primarily to a narrow band along the steep banks. While vegetation is somewhat denser on the western side of the island than the eastern side, it too tends to be concentrated along the island's perimeter. The gently sloping western tip of the island from the high ground to the water, a distance of approximately 200 feet, is generally well-vegetated. A number of large elms, sycamores and hackberries are found growing on the island's banks, especially on the west side. Red river birch and other water tolerant species are also found growing along the banks. Photos Nos. 1 and 2 show examples of the Mayo's Island's vegetation as well as the vegetated adjacent islands.

Mayo's Island lies in the 100 year floodplain and has been flooded a number of times in the past twenty-five years. The island also lies in a Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area with part of the island classified as an Intensively Developed Area (IDA) which overlays a Resource Protection Area and the other portion classified as a Resource Management Area as defined by the City's Chesapeake Bay Preservation Program. Figure 4, on page 32a, depicts the IDA area of Mayo's Island.

Mayo's Island is located in a stretch of the James River designated as a State Scenic River. Known as the Falls of the James Scenic River, this section is administered by the Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Board.

B. OWNERSHIP

When this evaluation began, Mayo's Island was owned in fee-simple by three separate individuals or groups. However, in May 1996, the owner of most of the western side of the island, all but

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION

about 10,000 sq ft, sold his property to the owners of the eastern end of the island, resulting in the island now being owned by two landowners.

Except for the approximately 10,000 sq ft parcel on the west side, all of the fee-simple ownership of the island is now held by one landowner interest. This smaller parcel fronts on 14th Street and houses the Reynolds Metals Recycling Center.

Two railroad companies and one electric utility hold rights-of-ways across the island. The City of Richmond owns the Mayo's/14th Street Bridge and its right-of-way.

C. USES

1. Historic Uses

Mayo's Island, which was named after the family of William Mayo, who designed the layout of Richmond. His son, John Mayo, Sr., was authorized to build a toll bridge which was designed to cross at Mayo's Island and his son, John Mayo, Jr., completed the bridge project crossing Mayo's Island in 1788.¹

Mayo's Island has experienced a variety of uses in its history. These uses have primarily been transportation, paper and wood manufacturing, and recreation.

Transportation

The island has had a long association with transportation related interests. Railways and a highway have and still use the island as a crossing point. In 1788, John Mayo, Jr. built a toll bridge connecting the City of Richmond with the Town of Manchester. This was the first and only bridge at the time connecting the north and south sides of the James River in the vicinity of Richmond. Floods, ice flows and destruction during the Civil War resulted in the need to replace portions or all of the bridge a number of times between 1788 and 1912. In 1905, the City of Richmond acquired Mayo's Island and the bridge in order to provide free access between the Richmond and Manchester sides of the river. In 1912, the City completed construction of the current bridge.²

Railway bridges followed John Mayo's bridge. By the late 1840s, the Richmond and Danville Railroad had constructed a bridge crossing the western tip of Mayo's Island as it connected the

¹Charles V. Ware. A Plan for the Redevelopment of Mayo's Island, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, Virginia Commonwealth University. April 1992. Page 13.

² *Ibid.* Pages 13-41.

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION

south and north shores of the James River. This line later became the Southern Railway and is now part of Norfolk Southern Corporation.³ A rail line owned by the CSX Corporation crosses the eastern side of the island.

From the 1950s to 1996, the eastern end of the island has been home to various transportation interests. In the 1950s a motor freight company, the Overnight Transportation Co., operated from this side of the island. Its offices and terminal were located in the two-story brick building that faces Mayo's Bridge at 501 South 14th Street. The existing T-shaped brick building on the east side was used as a truck maintenance and storage facility by the company. Later, other transportation companies used the east side of the island for activities ranging from refurbishing container trailers to truck maintenance to truck and trailer parking and storage.

During the 1950s, two gas stations, which were almost across the street from each other, were operated on the island. An ESSO station, which no longer exists, was located on the east side of Mayo's Bridge and a Gulf station, which operated until the early 1970s, was located on the island's west side. The building that housed the Gulf station is now used as part of the Reynolds Recycling operation.⁴

Paper and Wood Industry

Another major user of the island was the paper and wood related industry. In the 1870s a lumber mill operated on the east side of the island.⁵ The western side of the island was used by several paper companies. In the 1950s, the Manchester Paper Company operated a paper storage warehouse on the western portion of the island, followed by the Standard Paper Manufacturing Company and finally a paper recycling company until its warehouse was destroyed in 1987 by fire.

Recreation

Over the years, Mayo's Island has been used for a variety of recreational activities ranging from boating, to professional, college and high school sports; to fishing. In the 1890s, the Richmond Boat Club was constructed on the south bank of Mayo's Island, adjacent to and east of Mayo's Bridge. The Club's initial wooden building was destroyed in a 1930 fire and was replaced by a brick structure. Rowboats, canoes and rowing sculls were kept in four bays in the lower level of the building. It was a short distance from the boat bays to the water where there was a pier and floating dock at the bank. Besides the building, the Club also had a small outdoor swimming pool

³ *Ibid.*, Pages 17-25.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Pages 49-50.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Page 29.

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION

and two tennis courts.⁶ The Club remained in use until the 1969 flood destroyed the facilities. Canoeists and kayakers have and continue to use the island from time to time to put in or take out their craft.

The eastern side of the island was also used for other recreation activities including baseball and football. In April 1921, Mayo Island Park opened for Virginia League baseball games. The Park was later named Tate Field. Major League exhibition games were also played at Mayo Island Park and included a 1922 game in which Babe Ruth hit a home run over the right-field fence. The last baseball game was played at the Park in 1941.⁷

Colleges played football in the Park between 1921 and 1928. The University of Richmond, William and Mary, Virginia Military Institute, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, the University of North Carolina, and Hampden-Sydney college were some of the teams that played there. Once the City Stadium was built in 1929, college football was no longer played on the island, although high school teams played there for a few more years.⁸

Fishing has been and continues to be a major recreation activity associated with Mayo's Bridge, Mayo's Island and the adjacent waters. Over the years, Mayo's Bridge has also been used by walkers, runners and cyclists.

2. Current Uses

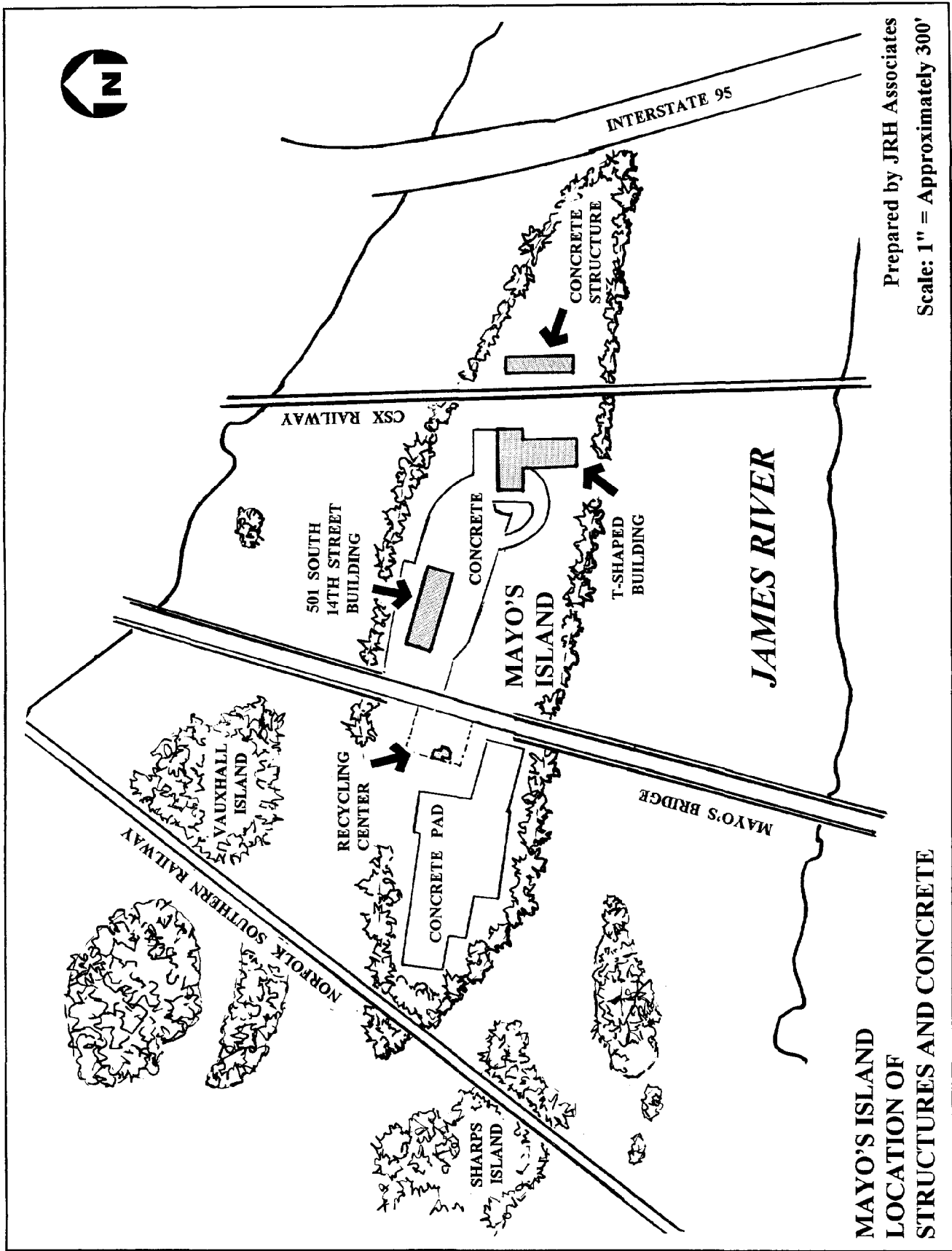
Reynold's Recycling operates a successful and well-established recycling center on the 10,000 sq ft site, which they lease, adjacent to Mayo's Bridge. A large reinforced, concrete pad, which was the floor of a paper storage warehouse that was destroyed by fire in 1987, is behind the recycling center and covers approximately 40 percent of the island's western side. An abandoned truck scale used to weigh trucks carrying paper is also in this area. Figure 3, on page 11a, depicts the location of the recycling center, which is shown in photo No. 4, on page 12, and the concrete pad, shown in photo No. 5, on page 12.

Although access to the island's western side behind the recycling center was somewhat restricted in the past, trash appears to have been dumped there. This area also appears to be a place where homeless individuals camp from time to time.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Pages 45-50.

⁷ Harry M. Ward. "Richmond Sports at Flood Tide," Virginia Cavalcade. May 1985. Pages 182-191.

⁸ *Ibid.*



**MAYO'S ISLAND
LOCATION OF
STRUCTURES AND CONCRETE**

Prepared by JRH Associates
Scale: 1" = Approximately 300'

Figure 3

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION

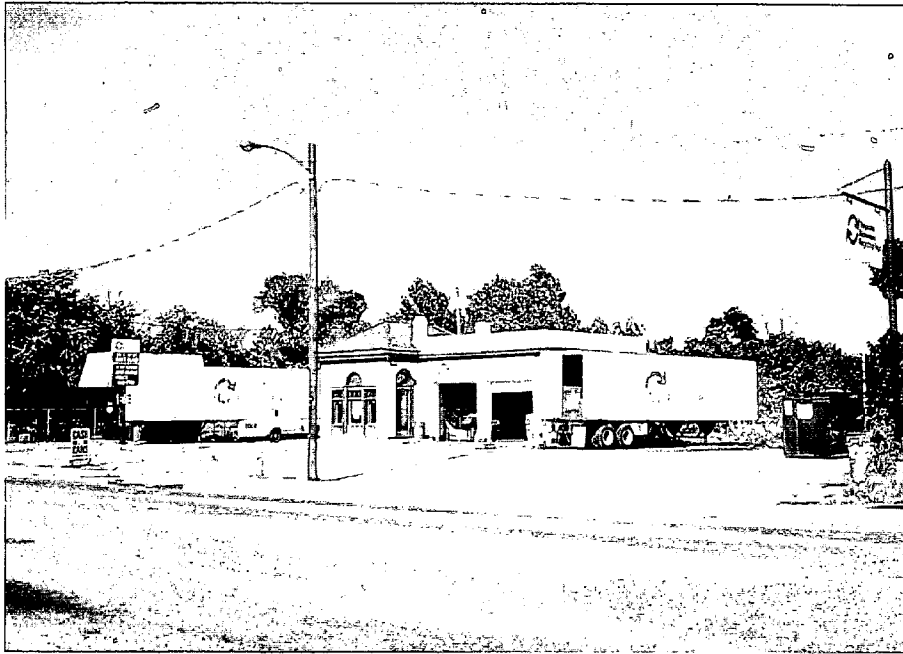


Photo 4

This photograph shows the recycling center on the west side of Mayo's Island facing 14th Street. The sidewalk on the west side and the at-grade condition of Mayo's Bridge/14th Street can also be seen in the picture.

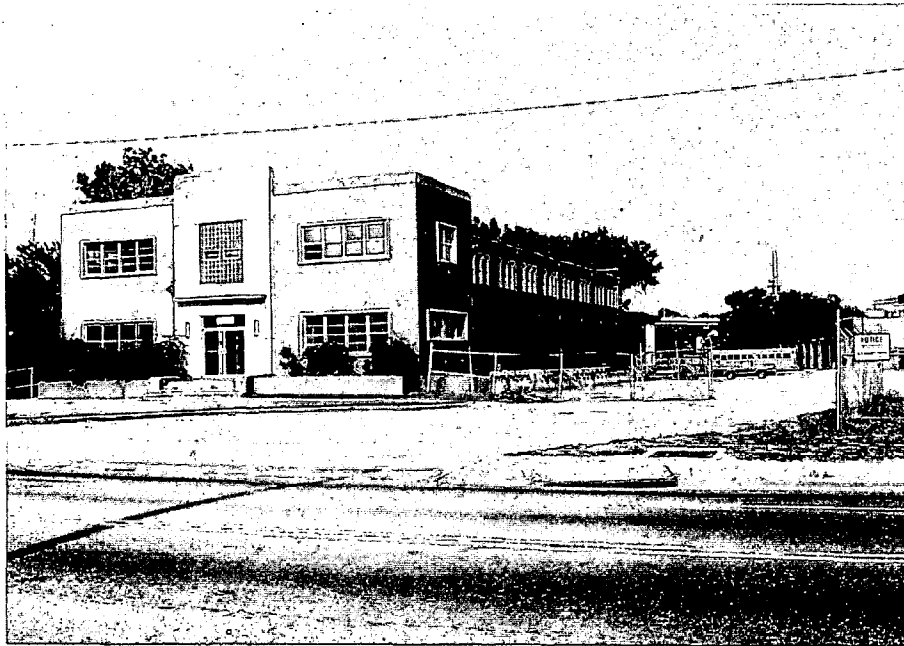


Photo 5

This view of a portion of the concrete pad on the western side of the island shows some of the debris in this area. Vegetation can be seen growing at the edges of the pad. The concrete pad is behind the recycling center which appeared in the previous photograph.

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION

On the east side of the island there are two large brick buildings which were built in the 1950s. These buildings, whose locations are depicted in Figure 3, are between Mayo's Bridge and the CSX Railway. There is a large, impervious, concrete surface present between these two buildings as can be seen in the accompanying photographs of the buildings and in Figure 3. One building, shown in Photo No. 6, is two-story, brick and adjacent to Mayo's Bridge with the address 501 South 14th Street. This building is served by water, sewer and electricity. A portion of this building is being used by an entrepreneur who plans to hold concerts and events on the island.



The brick, two-story, 501 South 14th Street building can be seen in the center of the photograph. To the back of this building, in the right hand side of the photograph, can be seen the T-shaped building with its bays. The concrete parking area can be seen between the two buildings. This photograph also shows Mayo's Bridge/14th Street at-grade as well as a portion of the sidewalk on the eastern side..

Photo 6

The other brick building, shown in Photo No 7 on page 14, is T-shaped and contains a number of bays which have been used for vehicle maintenance. This building will be used by the concert and event entrepreneur.

East of the CSX Railway crossing is a one-story, partially open, stall-like, concrete structure, depicted in Figure 3 and shown in Photo No. 8 on page 14. The event entrepreneur plans to use this structure for concessions during concerts and events.

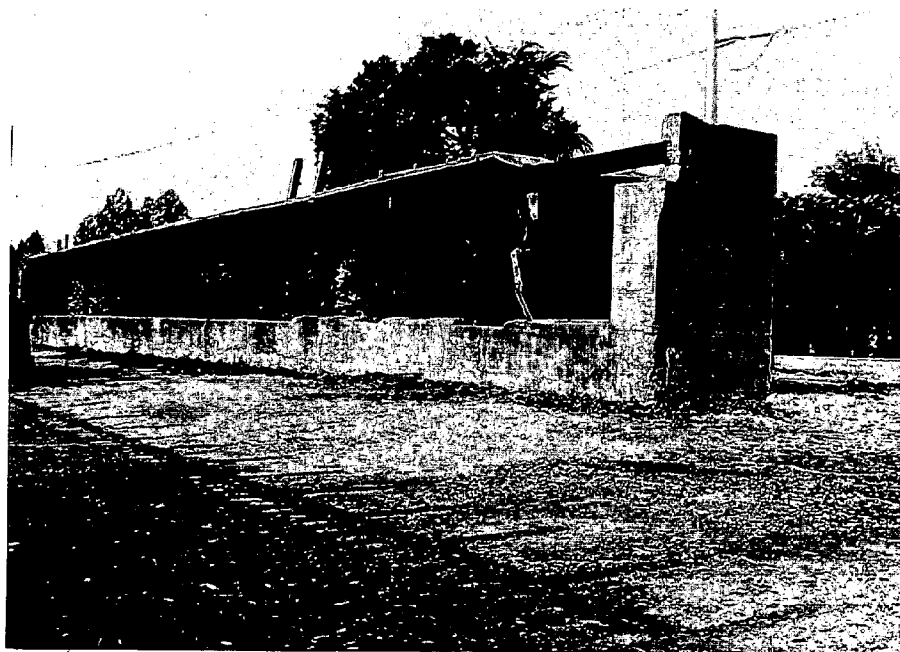
A gated, chain link fence restricts vehicular access somewhat to the eastern side of the island. Currently, it is locked at night.

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION



This brick T-shaped building was used for truck maintenance. It has a number of bays which could be adapted for other uses. The end of the 501 South 14th Street building can be seen in the far left of the photograph. A concrete surface can also be seen between the two buildings.

Photo 7



This concrete, stall-like structure is just east of and parallel to the CSX Railway crossing on Mayo's Island.

Photo 8

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION

The easy accessibility of Mayo's Island from Mayo's Bridge has provided for a historic and regular use of the island and the bridge by Richmonders for fishing, walking, jogging and bicycling. Canoeists and kayakers occasionally use the island for boating access. Several good fishing holes are located below the bridge and next to the island. Sometimes people use the tip of the western section of the island as a take off point to wade to several of the adjacent smaller islands. After work hours and on weekends, fishermen will park at the Reynolds Recycling parking lot and fish from the bridge or the island.

3. Proposed Uses

The eastern end of the island has been leased by its owners to a group which plans to provide facilities for and hold outdoor concerts and events, with food services, on the easternmost end of the island. They also plan to use the existing T-shaped building to house several recreation service businesses including a tackle and bait shop, bicycle and small boat rental and a rafting concession.

Approximately 30 concerts and events are planned annually. This group has an interest in providing public access to the island via a circumferential walking/biking path and to the river by means of fishing access piers and ramps. They have also indicated an interest in having take-outs for rafts and small boats.

Parking for the planned events will be available off the island in nearby Shockoe Bottom commercial lots. Some parking will also be available on the east side of the island and the group has the option to lease the newly purchased property on the west end for additional parking and recreational access.

The concert group is also exploring the possibility of converting the existing 501 South 14th Street Building, which faces 14th Street, to a full service restaurant. Parking for this facility would be separated from the other parking areas and related activities on the east side.

JRH Associates met with the entrepreneur on the site and have kept him advised of our activities and he has reciprocated. The group seems open to a cooperative arrangement with the City to provide access to the island and river in exchange for support in developing and maintaining the perimeter of Mayo's Island for public recreational use.

Cleanup of the eastern portion of the island is well underway by the lessees as are plans to attract recreational service vendors. Plans include some regrading of the site and landscaping and seeding of the interior of the eastern end where the concerts will be held. Stages and most sanitary facilities for concerts will be temporary so that they can be removed in the event of flooding. No permanent seating is planned. A perimeter walking path and a low fence similar to

that used on Brown's Island between the trail and the top edge of the island are planned.

In our opinion, there is potential here for a cooperative arrangement between the City's Department of Recreation and Parks and the lessee and owner to create an attractive recreational facility on Mayo's Island with public access. Such an arrangement should provide for public access in a documented agreement for not fewer than twenty years.

D. UTILITIES

Mayo's Island is served by electrical power provided by Virginia Power. City water and sewer service is currently available to the island. A sewer line runs from the north side of the river, under Mayo's Bridge. This line serves the two buildings on the east end of the island. As mentioned earlier, Mayo's Island is accessible for both pedestrians and vehicular traffic via the at-grade Mayo's Bridge.

E. SIGNIFICANT ATTRIBUTES

Mayo's Island is important and has great potential for public open space, recreation and other uses for the following reasons:

- **Mayo's Island is very accessible from both the north and south sides of the James River via Mayo's (14th Street) Bridge**

The four lane, lighted Mayo's Bridge, which has sidewalks on both sides, traverses the island at grade (street level), with ingress and egress points, providing relatively easy access to both sides of the island for pedestrians, cyclists, the physically challenged, and motorized vehicular traffic. In fact, Mayo's Island is the only island in the Richmond-Metro area which enjoys such accessibility from both sides of the river. (Eleven bridges connect the north and south banks of the James River in Richmond between Boshers Dam to the west and the Intermediate Terminal to the east. Three are railway bridges and eight are for cars and trucks. Of these bridges, only Mayo's Bridge connects an island in the James River with both banks at grade level as shown in Photo No. 1 on page 6 and Photo No. 6 on page 13.)

- **The island is in close proximity to a large number of people, many of whom are only a ten to fifteen minute walk away.**

Within a mile and a half north of Mayo's Island are located the major downtown hotels, the Richmond Center (Convention Center), the Coliseum, the City and State government centers,

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION

the financial district, corporate headquarters, Virginia Commonwealth University-Medical College of Virginia, the new Biotechnology Park, tourist attractions, businesses, the Main Street Station and residential neighborhoods. South of the island is the Manchester area with its businesses, residential areas and corporate offices. Development on both sides of the river in the downtown area has continued to move closer to the river over the last twenty years.

Plans are underway which will potentially bring more people into the area. The Richmond Center will be approximately tripled in size which will allow the City to attract much larger conventions. Plans are in place and money is budgeted for converting Main Street Station into a transportation center for Richmond and the region. This center will combine rail, automobile and bus services and will serve as a tourism center.

The Richmond Riverfront Development Corporation has begun a major project reaching from Brown's Island eastward to 18th Street along the old canal. When completed, this project will provide a major public space, approximately one and a half miles long, containing offices, shops, restaurants, residential spaces, a restored section of the old canal system, canal boat rides, landscaping and other amenities.

On the south side of the river a major corporation is constructing new offices adjacent to an office building it completed a year ago. This is part of the Manchester area development that is within one-half mile of Mayo's Island.

Providing public access and amenities such as landscaping, walkways and fishing access should make Mayo's Island more attractive to people to visit. Adding a bus stop at and/or trolley service to the island would expand the opportunities for people from both sides of the river who prefer not to drive or do not have a car to reach it.

- **Mayo's Island could play a valuable role as a publicly available open space and recreation resource providing increased access to the river as the City of Richmond continues its emphasis on the James River and its identification as a "River City".**

Current City Master Planning and Downtown Planning efforts emphasize the importance of the James River, where the river is increasingly seen as a major focal point for the City and the Richmond Region. The revised 1984 Downtown Plan's Riverfront Subdistrict Plan states "the riverfront should be accessible from Shockoe Bottom and the Farmer's Market along 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th Streets."⁹ Mayo's Island could provide an opportunity for people to

⁹ City of Richmond, Downtown Plan Text Amendment, Riverfront Subdistrict Plan, 1994, Page 4. (The 1994 revision of the 1984 Downtown Plan's Riverfront Subdistrict Plan, which is a part of the City Master Plan, was adopted by the City Planning Commission as an Addendum on March 7, 1994 and was approved by the City Council on March 28, 1994 (Ordinance NO. 94-52-58). The City of Richmond's current Master Plan was approved by City Council in

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION

experience the river coming from not only Shockoe Bottom but also from other areas as indicated earlier. The island provides an additional location where people could experience or see the river on both sides such as is the case with Belle Isle.

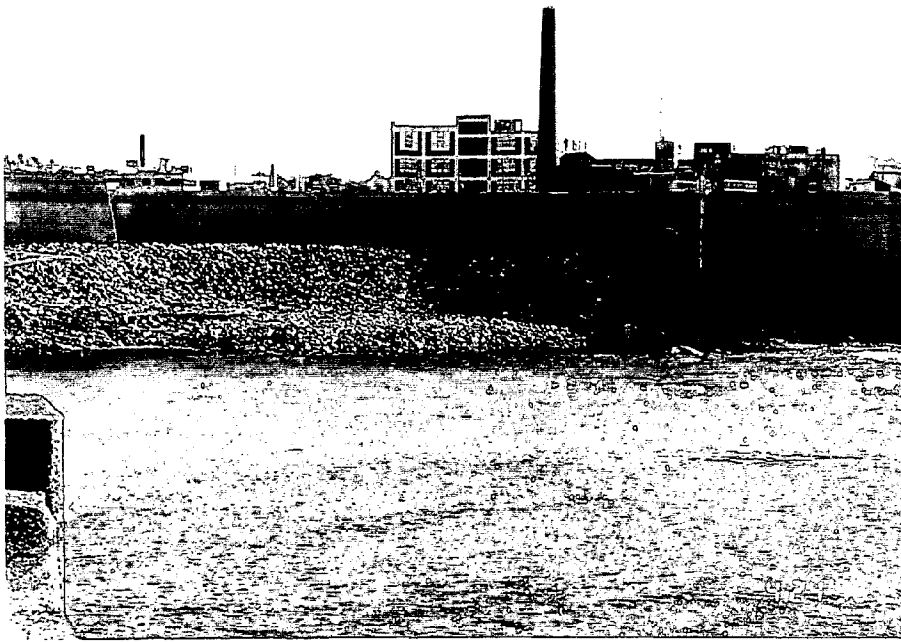
Construction of the floodwall, which is depicted in Figure 2 on page 6a, has made access to the James River in the area of Mayo's Island, especially on the north side, more difficult and may increase demand to use Mayo's Island for fishing access and other uses. The new floodwall on the south bank of the river has a walkway on top of the wall west of Mayo's Bridge and a path at its base east of the bridge. The walkway on top of the floodwall could become part of a loop trail that ran through Mayo's Island via Mayo's Bridge to the north side of the river, then westward to the Manchester Bridge and then southward, back to the south floodwall's walkway. A floodwall parking lot by 14th Street at the southern end of the bridge provides a location where people fishing can park and walk out on the bridge or to the island as well as down to the river below the floodwall. There could be demand to use Mayo's Island as a destination or recreation site; as a link in a greater trail and greenway; and/or as a starting point for beginning a hiking, biking or canoe trail. The north floodwall is shown in Photo No. 9 and the south floodwall is shown in Photo No. 10 on page 19.



A view of the north floodwall taken from Mayo's Island. The floodwall, shown in the center of the photograph, is the grey structure with the opening in it for 14th Street. The 14th Street opening can be closed by a flood gate.

Photo 9

1983. In 1984, the Master Plan was amended to include the 1984 Downtown Plan which was adopted by the City Planning Commission on November 2, 1984 and approved by the City Council on November 19, 1984 (Ordinance NO. 84-299-263). The Downtown Plan was developed to address the concerns and needs of and articulate a vision for the City's Central Business District. The Master Plan is currently being updated.



A view of the south floodwall from Mayo's Bridge. Rip rap can be seen at the base of the floodwall.

Photo 10

- **Mayo's Island is located at the fall line, (the Falls of the James River) which creates a variety of interesting river related environments.**

The western end of the island is surrounded by whitewater rapids, chutes and channels near its tip with flatter water near Mayo's Bridge. A number of smaller islands are located near the western end of the Mayo's Island. East of Mayo's Bridge, the island is surrounded by deeper, slower moving, flat, tidal water. Because of these conditions, the island and the surrounding area provide opportunities for a variety of visual, fishing and small, recreational boating experiences. Photo No. 1 on page 6 shows the fall line islands including Mayo's Island. Photo No. 11, on page 11, shows the rapids west of Mayo's Bridge while Photo No. 12, on page 11, shows the flat waters encountered east of the bridge.

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION



Photo 11

This view, taken from the base of the floodwall near Mayo's Bridge, shows the rapids near the western end of the island. The Norfolk and Southern Railway trestle bridge can also be seen crossing the western end of Mayo's Island.

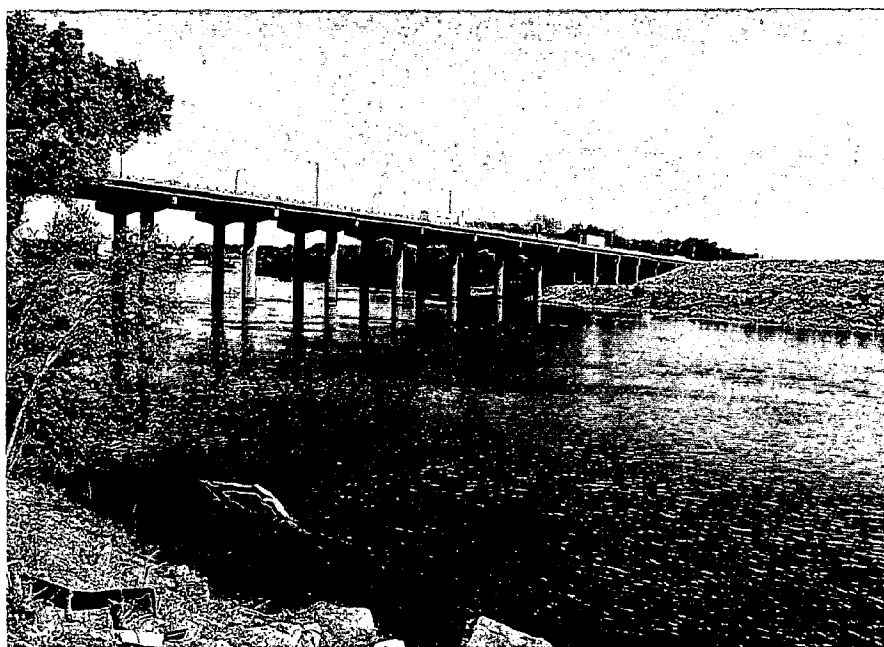


Photo 12

This photograph shows the flat water east of Mayo's Bridge. The Interstate 95 crossing can be seen in this view as well as the rip rapped portion of the south floodwall.

- **Mayo's Island has the potential to provide additional access to and from the river for boats which can be hand carried such as canoes, kayaks, rafts, and racing sculls.**

Currently, boating access in the area is somewhat limited. The most commonly used take-out for whitewater canoeists and kayakers using the lower section of the James River has been the Reynold's Metals Byrd Street canoe access ramp on the north bank, two blocks west of 14th Street. This access point was closed during construction of the Richmond Floodwall but has since been reopened. Proposed development associated with the Richmond Riverfront Development Corporation may affect the use of this ramp as an access point, especially during the construction phase. Other access points in the lower end of the river include Ancarrows Landing on the south side, which provides access for trailered boats, and a canoe and kayak access point on the north side near Tredegar, about 1-1/2 miles west.

Providing public access to the island, some parking and access points to the river will allow for use by boaters who hand carry their boats. Further, the island is a location where a boating center could be created possibly offering boat rentals, boating classes, and guided raft and canoe trips on the river.

- **The island is located at a very productive fishing area which receives a great deal of use.**

A rich fishing environment exists in the area of Mayo's Island because of its location at the fall line. The fall line is the interface between non-tidal waters west of Mayo's Bridge and the flat, deeper, tidal waters east of the bridge. West of the bridge there are a variety of chutes, rapids, and channels between islands and areas of open water. The small, vegetated islands west of Mayo's Island, create a variety of aquatic conditions and provide cover for aquatic species

The James River is a major fishway for anadromous fish, including shad, herring and striped bass. It is also a year-round fishery for bass, perch, catfish, and walleye. Probably the heaviest fishing traffic is during the spring spawning run of white perch. To improve fish passage in the area, the Commonwealth of Virginia's Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and the City have breached dams immediately upstream of Mayo's Island. The Manchester, Brown's Island, Hollywood and Williams Dams have been breached and opened to fish passage. The remaining dam, Boshers, should be breached within two years. Over time, this should enhance the anadromous fishery, if other conditions are favorable.

Dr. Greg Garman, a Fish Biologist at Virginia Commonwealth University, has indicated that "the fish community within the James River provides a unique recreational fishery for two reasons":

1. "Because of the greater proximity to Richmond and its environs, the fishery serves a

greater number of people than any other stretch of the river in the state" and

2. "Because the Fall Line is the interface between tidal and non-tidal waters , the James at this point hosts a large number of migratory fishes each spring. The mingling of year-round resident and migrant species results in a more diverse fish assemblage here than at any other point on the James River. Several of these economically and ecologically important fishes, including the American shad, have recently experienced dramatic declines in abundance within the Chesapeake region." ¹⁰

The 1993 Environmental Element of the City's Master Plan identifies the 14th Street Bridge as the most popular "fishing hole" in the City.¹¹ On Wednesday, April 24, 1996, at around 5:30 pm, the authors of this report counted seventeen people fishing from Mayo's Bridge, two individuals fishing from the eastern end of Mayo's Island, one person fishing in the water between Mayo's Island and Vauxhall Island and approximately ten people fishing from the south bank of the river below the flood wall. In addition, there were people fishing from several small boats around the eastern end of Mayo's Island

Access for fishing in this area is currently limited primarily to fishing from Mayo's Bridge, by boat and from the south side of the river in front of the floodwall. People sometimes unofficially use Mayo's Island and the smaller adjacent islands for fishing access.

Providing public access, including handicapped access, for fishing from Mayo's Island, would expand fishing opportunities in the area. Improving access to some of the adjacent islands west of Mayo's island would also enhance fishing accessibility. Fishing opportunities could be improved by developing fishing pods or piers, developing handicapped fishing access sites, building a trail around the island, operating a bait and tackle shop and conducting fishing oriented activities such as contests, classes, etc. On both sides of the bridge, depending upon river flow conditions, there are areas that can be waded and fished.

■ **Mayo's Island provides interesting views of its surroundings.**

The island's location provides, depending on where an observer is standing, opportunities for interesting and differing views of the James River, the City skyline to the north, both sides of the river, the floodwall, nearby islands, wildlife and people fishing and boating. Black ducks,

¹⁰ Grant Proposal for the FY 1994 Virginia Coastal Resources Management Program submitted by the City of Richmond, Virginia, Department of Recreation and Parks, 1994, Page 2.

¹¹ City of Richmond, Master Plan Environmental Element, 1993, Page 49. (The Environmental Element of the City Master Plan was adopted by the City Planning Commission on January 19, 1993 and approved by the City Council on March 22, 1993 [Ordinance NO. 93-90-83].

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION

wood ducks, mallards, herons and Canada geese can frequently be seen in the area. From the western tip of the island, as seen in Photo No. 13, one can see the adjacent vegetated islands, rocks and boulders in the river, and a diversity of rapids, flat water and chutes and channels.



In this view from the western end of Mayo's Island, one can see channels, rapids in the background, boulders and rocks in the water, and islands of vegetation.

Photo 13

- **Mayo's Island could potentially become a green oasis for both people and wildlife**

With native plant landscaping and appropriate development, removal of some of the existing impervious surface, and returning portions of the island to a more natural condition, the island will become an attractive focal point for a natural gateway and an oasis between the Downtown area north of the river and the Manchester area south of the river. The attractiveness of Mayo's Island for wildlife will also be enhanced with these changes.

- **The western side of Mayo's Island provides potential access to a number of smaller, nearby islands.**

A number of smaller islands, including Vauxall and Sharps Islands, are located adjacent to the western end of Mayo's Island. These islands are unoccupied and generally vegetated. Some of them can be reached by wading during low water conditions or by canoe and kayak. Providing access to Mayo's Island western tip would make it easier for people to view and, during low water conditions, walk to, explore and fish from several of these islands. Creating boat trails to the different islands would allow boaters to explore and learn more about them.

V. THE ROLE OF MAYO'S ISLAND IN RELATION TO CITY PLANS

A. MASTER PLAN/DOWNTOWN PLAN

Mayo's Island was addressed in the Riverfront Section of the City's 1984 Downtown Plan which is a section of the 1983 City Master Plan. The City is currently in the process of updating the Master Plan. Potential uses suggested for Mayo's Island in the 1984 Plan included: "ball fields; a major sport center, including swimming, tennis, racket ball, fitness center, a gymnasium, saunas, pro shops, restaurant and club."¹²

When the 1984 Downtown Plan's Riverfront Subdistrict Plan was revised in 1994, Mayo's Island was not directly mentioned. However, Mayo's Island has relevance to a number of policies and recommendations mentioned in the 1994 amended plan.

1. 1994 Amended Riverfront Subdistrict Plan-Policies

Of the eleven "Riverfront Policies" listed in the 1994 amended Riverfront Subdistrict Plan, Mayo's Island could play a role in the implementation of six of them.¹³ These six policies include:

- *Promote public and private riverfront development which will provide economic development benefits, including jobs, an increased tax base, and an improved downtown economy.*

Uses on Mayo's Island could provide opportunities for small businesses to provide services and products, for example, boat rental, boating classes, restaurant or food services, fishing supplies and classes, etc. As an attractive resource, landscaped and maintained and providing opportunities for people to experience the river in a variety of ways, Mayo's Island should provide another river oriented attraction for people in the downtown area.

¹²City of Richmond, Downtown Plan, 1984, Page 121. (The City of Richmond's current Master Plan was approved by City Council in 1983. In 1984, the Master Plan was amended to include the 1984 Downtown Plan which was adopted by the City Planning Commission on November 2, 1984 and approved by the City Council on November 19, 1984 [Ordinance NO. 84-299-263]. The Downtown Plan was developed to address the concerns and needs of and articulate a vision for the City's Central Business District. The Master Plan is currently being updated.)

¹³1994 Amended Riverfront Subdistrict Plan of the 1984 Downtown Plan. Pages 2-3.

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION

- *Promote public and private riverfront development which will increase tourism and provide entertainment opportunities for the public.*

Mayo's Island's accessibility to Downtown, tourist facilities in the Downtown area, the Main Street Station when it becomes a transportation hub, and other nearby river tourist attractions, puts it in a position to play a role in tourism in the Richmond area. The types of activities provided on and from the island will, in part, determine its attractiveness from a tourist perspective. For example, a boating center, good fishing opportunities, fishing contests, water related festivals, concerts, and an interesting restaurant are some of the uses which might be a draw for tourists visiting the area. Also, providing easy transportation links to other tourist visited facilities such as the downtown hotels, the convention center and other attractions should enhance its attractiveness from the perspective of tourism.

- *Include public amenities in riverfront development which will provide a recreational benefit to the region and complement private development.*

Depending upon uses, Mayo's Island could provide recreational benefits by increasing the opportunities for the public to experience and enjoy the James River at a unique area, the fall line. Trails; landscaping; fishing access sites, including for handicapped fishing; a boat launching site; food service; tackle shop; and other amenities and services would enable Mayo's Island to provide a range of outdoor recreational benefits. Private development could provide some of these recreational opportunities on and from the island.

- *Recognize the scenic beauty of the riverfront and encourage development which is based on public spaces and provides a continuous, quality pedestrian greenway.*

In its present condition, Mayo's Island is not especially attractive. However, removing some of the existing impervious surfaces and landscaping and returning portions of the island to a more natural state can make the island more visually pleasing. This will also increase the amount of greenspace in the river corridor in the downtown area. Mayo's Island and the smaller adjacent islands could become a part of a continuous, publicly accessible James River greenspace corridor. Because of its easy accessibility via Mayo's Bridge, Mayo's Island could be a link for pedestrian and bicycle use from both sides of the river, connecting with a variety of trails and pathways, including the floodwall. Opportunities exist for developing canoe and kayak trails and possibly, historic interpretation.

Returning portions of the island to a more natural state should make it more attractive to birds and other wildlife. Mayo's Island and the adjacent islands can serve as part of a wildlife corridor.

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION

- *Encourage development along the riverfront and canal which respects sunlight, open space and view corridors.*

Development of public open space on Mayo's Island, if properly designed, should be complementary to this policy. A revegetated, attractively developed and landscaped Mayo's Island should provide a more pleasing focal point when viewed from both sides of the river and as a gateway. Just as importantly, with access, the island can provide opportunities for people to experience exciting, diverse and interesting views of the river, the City skyline, adjacent islands, bridges, the river banks, the floodwall and other scenes. Development should complement, not detract from, the visual experience.

- *Recognize the benefits of public/private partnerships in riverfront development.*

Depending upon how access is provided and what services and opportunities are provided, the development and use of Mayo's Island could be a cooperative partnership between the public and private sectors. Current plans for the use of Mayo's Island for concerts, events, recreation and dining by the aforementioned entrepreneur are not inconsistent with future City plans. The City should pursue cooperative partnerships with the present owner and lessors.

2. 1994 Amended Riverfront Subdistrict Plan-Recommendations

Mayo's Island could also play a role in the implementation of the following recommendations of the 1994 Amended Riverfront Subdistrict Plan:

- *The riverfront should be accessible from Shockoe Bottom and the Farmer's Market along 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th Streets.¹⁴*

By providing public access, Mayo's Island, with its ease of accessibility, could provide an opportunity for people coming from not only Shockoe Bottom but from other areas as well to experience the river. The island provides an additional location where people could view the river on both sides such as is the case with Belle Isle.

¹⁴ 1994 Amended Riverfront Subdistrict Plan of the 1984 Downtown Plan. Page 4.

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION

- *Riverfront should be recognized as a special public resource which should be developed as a whole system.*¹⁵

Mayo's Island and the adjacent islands could be an integral part of a riverfront system by:

1. Providing a link in a related James River greenspace with boating, walking, wading and biking trails; opportunities to enjoy the river environment; and fishing opportunities;
2. Providing the public with access and the opportunity to experience the James River at a location where the deeper, tidal waters of the James River east of Mayo's Bridge meet the fresh waters of the fall line rapids west of the bridge. This location creates a variety of environmental and physical conditions and recreational opportunities which can be experienced on and around Mayo's Island; and
3. Linking with the James River Park system through trails, management and maintenance.

B. MASTER PLAN / ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENT

In 1993 an Environmental Element was added to the City's Master Plan. The Environmental Element provides comprehensive policy guidance on environmental protection and preservation. It sets forth policies and directions for City actions and recommends projects and programs which will prevent or reduce environmental degradation. Five issue areas are addressed in the Environmental Element: Air Quality, Natural Features, Noise, Solid Waste, and Water Resources.¹⁶ Mayo's Island ties in directly with the Natural Features area.

The Riverfront Land Use and Development Section of the Environmental Element recommends converting Mayo's Island to public open space: "*the conversion of Mayo Island into public open space is recommended due to its accessibility by City residents, including the handicapped, the availability of excellent fishing opportunities, and the potential for boating access.*"¹⁷

The Environmental Element identifies the 14th Street Bridge, which crosses Mayo's Island, as the most popular "fishing hole" in the City.¹⁸ It further indicates that the James River rapids are home

¹⁵ Ibid., Page 5.

¹⁶ Master Plan Environmental Element, Page 5.

¹⁷ Ibid., Pages 61-62.

¹⁸ Ibid., Page 49.

to an excellent smallmouth bass fishery while areas of flat water below the downtown area are known for exceptional largemouth bass fishing.¹⁹

1. Environmental Element Recommendations

Other recommendations in the Environmental Element that Mayo's Island could potentially play a role in meeting include:

- *Identify and provide access to existing and potential fisheries with the assistance of public and private groups.*²⁰

The fisheries resources and fishing activities are well established in the vicinity of Mayo's Island. As indicated earlier in this report, Mayo's Island straddles the fall line, with whitewater rapids and channels at the western end of the island and flat, tidal water at the eastern end. This variation creates a variety of habitats for fish and other aquatic life.

Providing public access to Mayo's Island, which has had a tradition of fishing use, and developing fishing facilities such as fishing pods or piers and handicapped fishing access will increase fishing opportunities. This could potentially be accomplished by public and private entities working cooperatively.

- *Increase handicapped access to fisheries, particularly in areas impacted by the floodwall.*²¹

The floodwall is located along both sides of the river in the vicinity of Mayo's Island. It significantly reduces access to the river from the river banks in this area. There is access to the river from the south end of Mayo's Bridge, however, it does not offer handicapped access for fishing. Even where there is some access, the rip-rapped areas associated with the floodwall make it difficult, and sometimes impossible, for many people to reach the water. The fact that Mayo's Island is easily accessible via the at-grade Mayo's Bridge helps to create conditions favorable to providing handicapped access to the island, provided other actions are undertaken. Handicapped parking will need to be developed on both sides of the island. In addition, "handicapped friendly" walks will need to be provided on the island as will handicapped accessible fishing piers at good fishing holes. Such actions would greatly enhance the opportunities for everyone to fish.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Page 48.

²⁰ Master Plan Environmental Element, Page 50.

²¹ *Ibid.*, Page 52.

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION

- *Provide for maintenance and security at urban fishery access points.*²²

Providing a public safety mini-station for police and river rescue on the eastern side of Mayo's Island would enhance security and public safety in the area. Safety can also be enhanced by increased public activity; the use of design elements, such as lighting; and having businesses present.

- *Implement park and recreation area development and renovation projects through the CIP (Capital Improvements Program) that are consistent with the greenways plan.*²³

Use of Mayo's Island and the smaller adjacent islands for recreation and open space use fits in with the greenways concept. Mayo's Island is depicted in the Metro Richmond Greenway's Committee Draft Concept Plan as part of a proposed River Trails/Boat Route.²⁴ The island can become a link for boating, biking and walking trails along the James River Greenway corridor. Landscaping and revegetating the island, using native species attractive to wildlife, will turn the island back into more of a greenspace and enhance it as a habitat for wildlife.

2. Natural Features Issue Area Objectives

There are a number of objectives listed in the Natural Features Issue Area of the Environmental Element that Mayo's Island can help to reach:

- *Promote the preservation and maintenance of existing vegetation and guide the planting of new vegetation for the purpose of improving the quality of development, improving the aesthetics of the City, providing habitat for urban wildlife, and minimizing stormwater runoff.*²⁵

Removal of some of the impervious surfaces, cleaning up, landscaping, revegetating, and returning some of the island to a more natural state can make Mayo's Island more aesthetically pleasing and attractive to wildlife and will reduce runoff. With appropriate landscaping and development, Mayo's Island can become an attractive focal point or green oasis which enhances the experience of people traveling from one side of the river to the other

²² *Ibid.*, Page 50.

²³ *Ibid.*, Page 58.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Figure 12, Page 55-a.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Page 45.

or visiting and viewing the island.

- *Preserve, manage, and promote urban wildlife and wildlife habitat in a manner consistent with the resources and needs of the City*²⁶.

As indicated earlier in this report, returning portions of the island to a more natural condition, removal of some of the existing impervious surface, landscaping and revegetation, especially using native plant species attractive to wildlife, should increase wildlife habitat on the island.

- *Promote the development and management of the James River and appropriate lakes and streams within the City as urban fisheries.*²⁷

Providing fishing access from Mayo's Island will, as stated earlier in this report, improve access for fishing by an urban population at a very productive fishing location.

- *Ensure availability and access to open space, recreation, and natural areas for all citizens of Richmond through implementation of a master plan for parks and natural areas.*²⁸

Mayo's Island and its namesake bridge has traditionally been used for fishing by people from the Richmond area. Mayo's Island should be included in a master plan for parks and open space as a publicly accessible recreation and open space resource. Its ease of access, close proximity to a large number of people and location at the fall line makes the island an ideal site for providing access to recreational opportunities and open space.

- *Protect the recreational, aesthetic, and environmental attributes of the James River consistent with its role as a unique urban waterway.*²⁹

Converting portions of Mayo's Island to a more natural greenspace, and developing and using it for primarily open space and outdoor recreation use will allow it to compliment the desire to protect the recreational, aesthetic and environmental attributes of the river.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Page 47.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Page 48.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Page 53.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Page 58.

VI. CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE ACQUISITION AND/OR DEVELOPMENT, MANAGEMENT AND USE OF MAYO'S ISLAND

There are circumstances that can potentially affect the acquisition, development, management and use of a potential recreation site. Identified below are nine areas to consider in the case of Mayo's Island. These nine areas do not constitute the entire universe of things which may need to be considered.

■ Hazardous Materials

If the City should choose to acquire Mayo's Island, the island should be evaluated by a qualified source for the presence of toxic and hazardous materials and buried tanks. For a number of years, the east side of the island served transportation uses and was used as a trailer and truck storage and maintenance area. Two gas stations with underground tanks were also operated on the island.

■ Floodplain and Flooding

The Island is located in the James River's 100 year floodplain. In the middle of the island, the 100-year floodplain is 36 feet in elevation while at the upper end of the island it is 36.9 feet. Since and including Hurricane Camille in 1969, the island has experienced four floods exceeding 27 feet. The Camille caused flood reached 30.76 feet. Hurricane Agnes, in 1972, resulted in a flood, reaching a level of 36.5 feet, completely inundating the island. The most recent flood, in the spring of 1996, was 22 feet high and resulted in minor flooding of a portion of the island's far eastern end. Mayo's Island is 29 feet in elevation above sea level at its highest point.

City Code restricts development in the 100-year floodplain.³⁰ Some of the restrictions are:

- No new residential construction, where construction began on or after December 9, 1991, will be allowed unless adequate vehicular access can be provided to the site at all times prior to and during the 100-year flood.
- Development or land-disturbing activities will not be permitted within a floodway district if they will cause an increase in flood levels during the 100-year flood.
- Development or land-disturbing activities will not be permitted if they will adversely affect the capacity of any floodway or watercourse subject to the provisions of the City Code Chapter on Floodplain Management.

³⁰ City of Richmond, Code, Article II, Floodplain Management, Pages 937-950.

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION

- Development or land-disturbing activities are not permitted in a Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area (within which Mayo's Island is located) until a Chesapeake Bay site plan has been approved.

Mayo's Island is located between two sections of the new floodwall which is designed to withstand a 283-year level flood. Floodgates are located at either end of Mayo's Bridge. Access to Mayo's Bridge would probably be restricted at floodwaters around 26 feet high, depending upon the predictions for total flood height and the speed with which flood waters are projected to rise. This height provides an approximately four foot margin of safety in which to close the flood gates, which have a 30 1/2 feet sill elevation. It takes approximately nine hours to close these gates. Prior to closing the gates, public safety personnel go to Mayo's Island to alert anyone there that they should leave. Procedures are also in place to restrict access to the island and bridge when the floodgates may not be closed but it is believed that flood conditions pose a safety hazard to people.

Any development proposed on the island will have to consider the potential effects from flooding. In addition, constraints on development in the 100-year floodplain will also have to be considered.

■ Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas

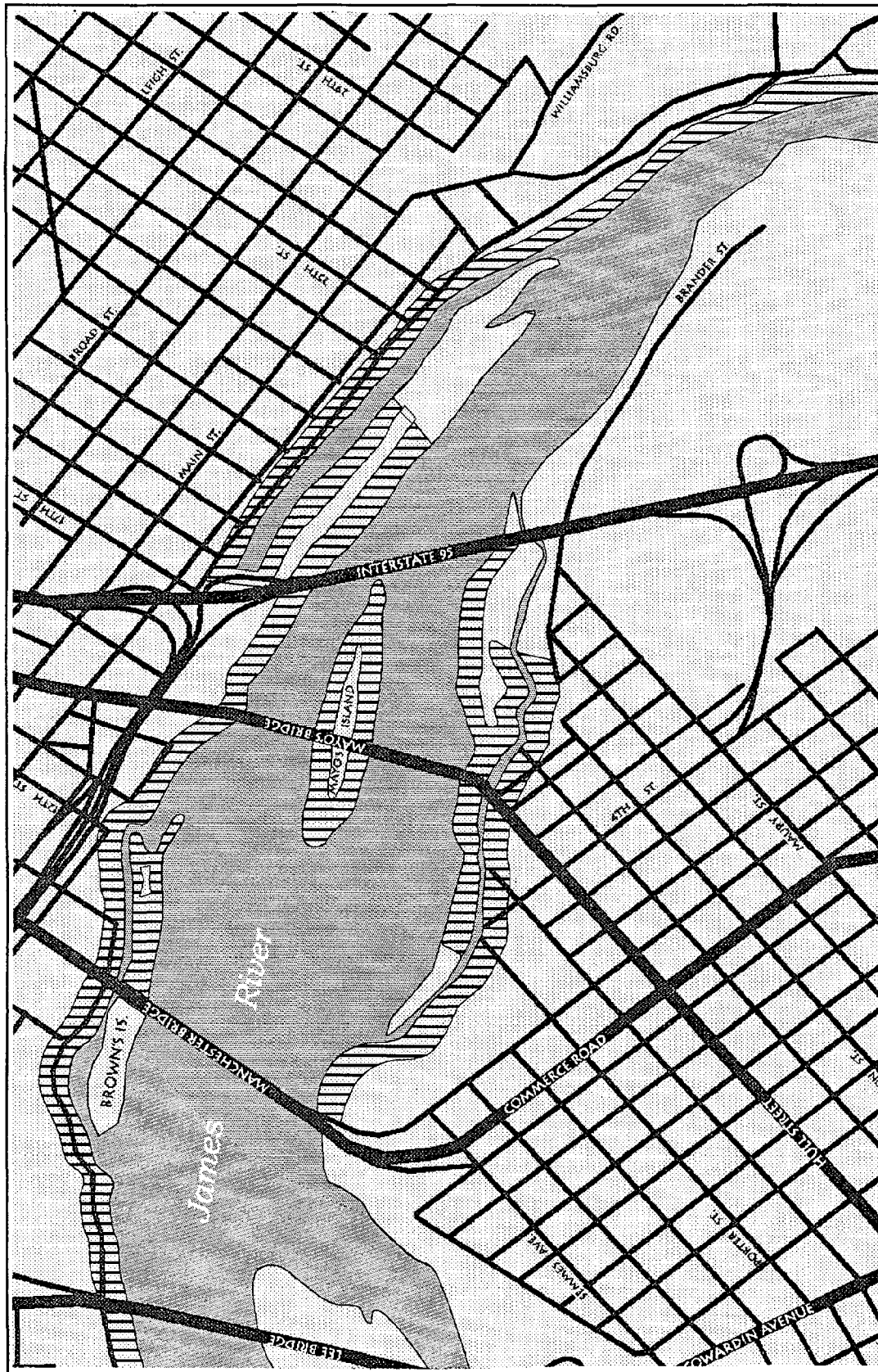
Mayo's Island lies in a Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area with part of the island classified as an Intensively Developed Area (IDA) which overlays the Resource Protection Area (RPA) and the remainder of the island classified as a Resource Management Area (RMA) as defined by the City's Chesapeake Bay Program, adopted by the City of Richmond in 1991.³¹ Figure 4, on page 32a, depicts the limits of the IDA.

There are requirements which must be met before development can occur in these areas. In addition, there are some restrictions on development, depending upon the circumstances. Development in Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas will be required to meet various water quality performance criteria and obtain various approvals.

■ Clean Up, Landscaping and Revegetation

The island needs to be cleaned up, revegetated and landscaped with native plants. Removal of the eight inch thick, almost two acres in area concrete pad on the western end of the island may be expensive. Cleanup work is under way on the eastern side of the island by an entrepreneur who wants to hold concerts and events on that end. It is recommended that native plant species attractive to wildlife and that can tolerate flooding from time to time be used in landscaping when possible. Native species will have a better chance of survival.

³¹ City of Richmond, Public Information Manual, Chesapeake Bay Preservation Program, 1994.



**MAYO'S ISLAND
INTENSIVELY DEVELOPED AREAS (IDA)**

Base map provided by the City of Richmond,
Department of Community Development

Figure 4

When considering landscaping, attention should be given to developing a design and using materials and vegetation which will reduce the amount of maintenance required.

■ **Combined Storm and Sewer Outfall**

There is a combined storm and sewer outfall (CSO) located on the north bank of the river across from Mayo's Island. The lower James River from the Boulevard Bridge to the tidal area does not meet water quality standards for bacteria according to the Department of Environmental Quality. However, it is considered safe for fishing and consumption of fish. The City of Richmond is currently involved in a major CSO project which will ultimately result in the capture and partial treatment of CSO events which will then be released below Mayo's Island. Until the CSO project is completed, direct human contact, such as swimming, in the waters around Mayo's Island should not be encouraged.

■ **Parking and Public Transportation**

Satellite parking and public transportation should be provided in order to reduce the impact of parking on the island's use as well as provide access for a broad range of potential users. The entrepreneur who plans to hold concerts and events on the island has reached agreements with nearby parking garages for people to park and walk to the island when events are held during non-working hours. Parking on the island, especially the west side, should be minimized to allow for greater revegetation and landscaping and reducing impervious surface areas. A limited amount of parking is available at the floodwall parking lot located adjacent to the floodwall and 14th Street at the south end of Mayo's Bridge. Consideration should be given to providing a parking area on the north side of the river by the floodwall and 14th Street. Bus and possibly trolley service to the island should be available.

■ **Traffic and Safety**

Mayo's Bridge (14th Street) carries a significant volume of daily traffic. Traffic counts conducted in September of 1994 indicated traffic volumes of 6,884 vehicles northbound and 8,156 vehicles southbound. Because of this traffic and concern for safety, it may be necessary to install a traffic light on the bridge at the Island to allow pedestrians to cross the street to go from one side of the island to the other and vehicular ingress and egress from the island. Constructing perimeter paths around the two sides of the island that connect below Mayo's Bridge at the southern side of the island would allow walkers to avoid crossing the street.

People will need to feel safe using Mayo's Island. Safety can be enhanced by increased public activity, the use of design elements, including sufficient lighting, and having businesses present. It is recommended that a public safety substation be located on the eastern side of the island near Mayo's Bridge. Such a substation could house a small police unit and a river rescue unit.

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION

■ **River Access Difficulties**

The majority of the island has steep banks approximately 25 feet to 28 feet high which create challenges for providing access to the water and have the potential for erosion problems if they are not vegetated. Both ends of Mayo's Island provide relatively easy access to the water. The eastern tip of the island is adjacent to the Interstate 95 bridge and bridge piers. Easy access to the adjacent islands west of Mayo's Island does not exist. These islands can be reached by boat and occasionally people will wade/walk to them during lower river flows.

■ **Maintenance**

As with any recreation site, providing for proper maintenance on the island will be an important issue. Facilities should be designed to minimize maintenance. Consideration should be given to requesting volunteer assistance, especially from user groups.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. USE, ACCESS, AND OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

The overall recommendation for Mayo's Island is that it be returned to a more natural condition and developed for a variety of open space and recreation uses, many of which are generally river related. It is recommended that the western end of Mayo's Island be, in-part, returned to a more natural state. More intensive development is recommended for the eastern portion of the island. Boating access to the river is recommended here as well as the development of a boating center in the existing T-shaped building. The potential for developing a full service restaurant in the 501 South 14th Street building on the east side should also be explored.

Fishing access is recommended for both sides of the island as are walking paths. Both sides of the island should be cleaned up, landscaped and revegetated. Figure 5, on page 44a, depicts the locations of a number of the recommended features. Specific recommendations include:

1. Landscape, Revegetate and Clean Up the Island

The island should be cleaned up, landscaped, revegetated and returned to a more natural condition. Landscaping could include creating grassed areas, constructing walks, planting native trees and shrubs which attract wildlife, using attractive and informative signage, landscaping parking areas, providing seating and using attractive fencing where needed. Special emphasis should be given to returning most of the western side of the island a more natural condition. A priority should be given to retaining the larger, more mature trees growing on the island. The amount of impervious surface on the island should be reduced, including removal of the concrete pad on the west side. Landscaping should be designed to minimize maintenance, enhance security, create beauty, improve accessibility and support wildlife. If the island is owned by the City, it is recommended that professional design organizations be contacted to take on a portion or all of the landscaping as a project.

2. Provide Handicapped Access

Opportunities for handicapped use of the island for fishing, visiting and viewing should be developed and provided.

3. Provide Access and Develop Pathways

Paths for walking, biking and access to the water, depicted in Figure 5, should be provided on the island. A handicapped accessible perimeter trail should be developed along the top of the bank for the entire island. It is recommended that the trail continue under Mayo's Bridge on the south side of the island. This will allow trail users to have to cross from one side of the island to the other without having to worry about traffic on 14th Street. To make the path

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION

under the bridge wheelchair accessible may require a substantial amount of work along a portion of the south bank on either side of Mayo's Bridge. An attractive, safety fence, similar to the one on Brown's Island, should be installed between the path and the edge of the bank.

The perimeter of the west side along the edge of the top of the bank is well suited for a walking and biking trail, offering over looks of the river and views of the City to the north. Consideration should be given to constructing an overlook off the path on the north side, as depicted in Figure 5, to allow views upriver, of the river's north shore, of the adjacent islands and of a portion of the city skyline. A north-south path is also recommended to allow people to cut across the middle of this side of the island. A view from the north bank of the western tip of the island is shown in Photo No. 14.



In this view from the north side of the Mayo's Island's western tip, one can see rapids, boulders, adjacent islands and a portion of the City's skyline.

Photo 14

Access to the river on the north side of the island here is not suitable until one reaches the western tip because of the very steep bank slopes and the presence of old stone walls. The stone walls offer little opportunity for visitors to reach the water.

The upper tip of the island's west end offers a terrain that gradually slopes down and enters the river under the Norfolk Southern Railroad bridge, shown in Photo No. 15 on page 37. With minor work, this area could be used for ambulatory fishing access, hiking and exploring, and canoe and kayak use. The tip also provides access to much of the base of the south side

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION

of the west end of the island, shown in Photo No. 16, for fishing.



Photo 15

Shown in this photograph of the western end of Mayo's Island is an existing path running from the crest of the bank to under the Norfolk Southern Railway bridge to the western tip of the Island. This is an area of relatively gently sloping terrain. The western tip is well vegetated and provides access to the southern bank of the western portion of the island as well as to the adjacent islands.

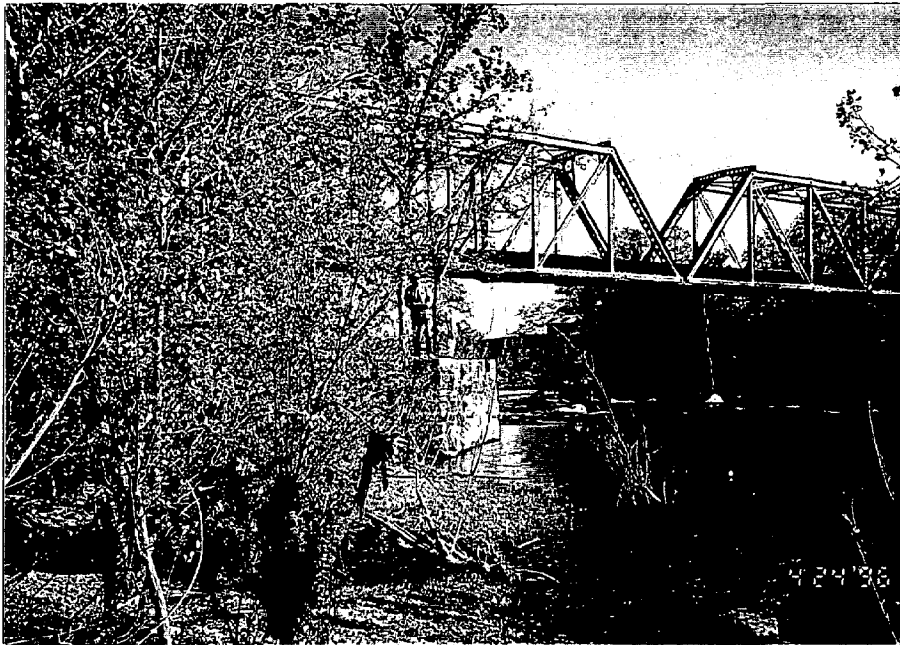


Photo 16

This view shows a portion of the southern bank near the western tip of Mayo's Island. The southern bank, which is vegetated, can be reached via the island's western tip and provides fishing access to the river, which is seen in the right hand portion of the photograph.

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION

The Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks span the James via bridges and piers touching not only the western tip of Mayo's Island but also crossing Vauxall Island to the north and Sharp's Island to the south. This connecting link offers a possible linkage for pedestrian access to three of the largest islands in the downtown James. Consideration should be given to the feasibility of developing a walkway between the islands and the north bank using the piers and substructure already in place. Such a walkway would be expensive to construct and would require negotiation and cooperation with the Norfolk Southern Corporation. It would also have to be developed in a way that was safe for pedestrians to use, safe from rail traffic and falling objects. The Norfolk Southern Railway crossing from Mayo's Island to Sharps Island is shown in Photo No. 17.



In this picture the Norfolk Southern Railway bridge can be seen spanning a portion of the James River between Mayo's Island on the left and Sharps Island on the right.

Photo 17

A perimeter walking trail should also be developed for the east side of the island. Three access points to the water off of the trail are recommended on this side. All three access points would allow for fishing, taking out or putting in hand carried boats and rafts, and being near the water. Two of the access points are recommended to be wheelchair accessible while the third is not. Another pathway may also be needed for people to walk north-south across the island. It is recommended that some type of netting or screening be positioned between the CSX Railway tracks, shown in Photo No. 18, on page 39, and the ground below to protect people on the island from falling objects.



The CSX Railway crossing of the eastern portion of Mayo's Island. North is toward the upper right hand corner of the photograph. The tires seen in the photograph have been removed.

Photo 18

4. Provide Fishing Access

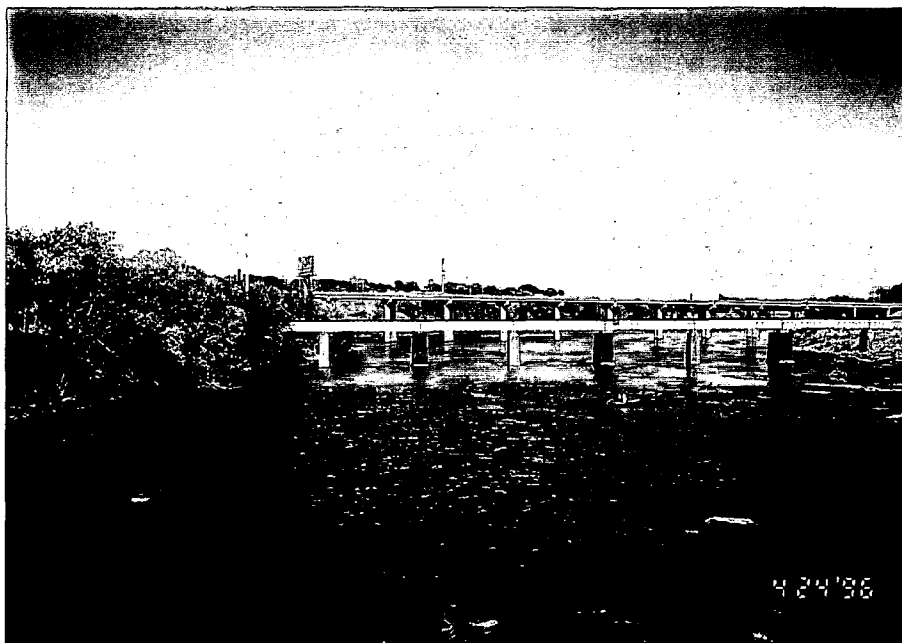
It is recommended that fishing access be provided at a number of sites on the island. Providing access at the western tip will allow people fishing to access a portion of the southwest bank and, depending upon river conditions, wade out into the water or to several of the adjacent islands. Three fishing access locations are suggested for the east side of the island. A site for handicapped and non handicapped fishermen is recommended via the boat access ramp proposed for the south side. This will allow access to a portion of the south bank and a handicapped fishing pier should constructed parallel to and along a portion of the bank. Another potential handicapped/non handicapped fishing site is at the other boat access point on the north bank. A fishing pier which runs along and parallel to the bank could be used by both fishers. Providing access at the eastern tip would allow fishing access not only at the tip but also to a portion of the south bank. Figure 5 depicts the access sites mentioned. The proposed access sites for the eastern side of the island are shown in the following photographs: Photo No. 19, on page 40, - north access site, Photo No. 20, on page 40, - south access site and Photo No. 21, on page 41, - eastern tip.

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION



This photograph shows a portion of the north bank of the eastern end of Mayo's Island in the vicinity of the CSX Railway crossing. The access site is proposed for just east (to the left in the photograph) of the CSX Railway, which is the closest bridge to the viewer. The Interstate 95 bridge can be seen in the background.

Photo 19



This photograph shows a portion of the south bank on the eastern end of Mayo's Island in the vicinity of the T-shaped building. The access site is proposed in the general vicinity to the left of the CSX Railway which is the closest bridge to the viewer. Interstate 95 can be seen in the background. The south bank in this area is vegetated and fairly steep.

Photo 20



Access to the eastern tip of Mayo's Island, shown in this photograph, is relatively easy. From the sandy tip, one can walk along a portion of the southern bank for fishing. The Interstate 95 bridge piers can be seen in the top of the photograph.

Photo 21

5. Provide Boating Access and Develop a Boating Center

It is recommended that Mayo's Island become a focal point for boating, by providing facilities and access for water craft that can be hand carried to the water such as canoes, kayaks, rafts, racing sculls, row boats and possibly small jon boats. The facility and access points are recommended for the eastern side of the island. A variety of boating related activities could be conducted from the island:

- Canoes, kayaks, row boats and possibly jon boats could be rented to people for fishing, sightseeing, exercise, nature observation and just paddling around on the river.
- Canoe and kayak trails of varying degrees of difficulty and expertise required could be developed for paddling around the island and to the adjacent islands.
- Classes could be held on boating and boating safety. Classes specifically designed for inner city children on crew, canoeing and kayaking could be developed by working with the school system and the Department of Recreation and Parks.
- The island could potentially become the home for the Richmond Boat Club which is a crew organization that races sculls.
- A rafting concession which offers raft trips on the James River in the Richmond Metro area could operate off the island. Mayo's Island could be the take out point for raft excursions.

Portions of the existing T-shaped building located on the east side of the island, shown in Photo No. 7 on page 14, could potentially be adapted for reuse as a boating center. It could be used by a concession which rented canoes and other small water craft; a James River rafting business which conducted raft trips down the river; a crew organization for storing racing sculls and holding meetings and for boating classes. Other amenities that should be considered for the facility include space for offices related to outdoor activities on the island, a classroom, a meeting room, bathrooms, a place to store outdoor equipment, and a snack bar or vending machines. This facility could also be a place where bicycles could be rented and water, biking and walking trail maps of the area obtained. The building could also be used by a public safety police and river rescue unit. While parking currently exists by the building, it will need to be attractively landscaped and the spaces lined off so that there is room to off-load boats. In any development and use of this building, consideration must be given to the potential for flooding of the island, the possibility of the island being closed to access during certain flood conditions and any requirements necessitated by the building being located in the 100-year floodplain and a Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area.

There are several sites on the east side of Mayo's Island where access to the water for hand carried boats and rafts could be provided. If the T-shaped building is developed into a boating facility, then access could be developed on the south bank adjacent to the building. It is recommended that a main access ramp be constructed at the south bank of the east side of the island by the south end of the T-shaped building. A portion of this bank is shown in Photo No. 20 on page 40. This location would require a minimal amount of carrying to move boats and rafts to the water. It would also help to keep boating related activities generally concentrated in a main location and minimize conflicts with other uses. Consideration should be given to providing a floating dock at the base of the ramp. This site should also provide fishing access to a portion of the south bank. It is recommended that access for handicapped fishermen be incorporated with the boat ramp since this is a good fishing area. An appropriate ramp slope and rest stops will need to be used when designing the ramp.

Another, less developed access point for boating could be provided at the north bank at the CSX Railway crossing area. This site could be used by canoeists, kayakers and rafters who use the river north of the island. The north bank site, which is shown in Photo No. 19 on page 40, would also serve as an access point to the water for fishermen and others who wanted to reach the water. This site should be handicapped accessible for fishing.

The eastern tip of the island could also be used for occasional take-out of rafts, canoes and kayaks. Because of terrain, this is the most easily accessible, existing location to the water.

6. Develop a Restaurant on the Island

The eastern portion of the Island may potentially be a good location for a full-service restaurant. Dining on an easily accessible island in the middle of the river, with interesting

views of the river and City skyline, should draw people. This might be especially attractive if outdoor seating could be provided in good weather. The 501 South 14th street building, depicted in Figure 5, should be examined to determine if it could be readapted for restaurant use. In any development and use of this building, consideration must be given to the potential for flooding of the island, the possibility of the island being closed to access during certain flood conditions and any requirements necessitated by the building being located in the 100-year floodplain and a Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area. In addition to a full-service restaurant, it is recommended that some type of smaller food vendor or food vending area be provided for boaters, people fishing, and people walking or biking to and on the island.

7. Provide for Public Safety

The City should explore the possibility of locating a small public safety substation, possibly staffed by bike patrol officers and a river rescue unit, on the east side of the island. Having a police presence would enhance security and also provide for rapid response to either side of the river. If these services are located on the island, it is recommended that they be located in the T-shaped building or in a portable structure which could be moved during floods.

8. Maintain the Recycling Center Operation

A 10,000 sq ft parcel on the west side of the island bordering Mayo's Bridge is the site of the Reynolds Metals Recycling Center, depicted in Figure 5. This center is open during the week and its parking lot is used by people fishing and occasionally by boaters on the weekend and after work hours for parking. In addition to its recycling operations, this center, with some improvements, could become a site used to promote recycling through educational activities, materials and signage.

9. Provide Off-Site Parking

Off-site parking be encouraged as much as possible. On the west side of the island, parking should be concentrated near 14th Street and limited to that needed by the recycling center, handicapped parking, and a handful of spaces for fishing and boating access.

A greater amount of parking will be needed on the eastern side to serve the boating center, handicapped access, parking for fishermen, and a restaurant. Parking for boaters should be concentrated near the T-shaped building. Spaces need to be large enough to allow for off-loading boats from vehicles. If a restaurant becomes a reality, then sufficient parking for the restaurant, separate from other parking will need to be provided. Proposed parking areas are depicted in Figure 5.

The City should explore the possibility of providing parking at the north end of Mayo's Bridge on either side of 14th Street. Visitors could park there and walk to the island, just as they presently do in the case of the south side.

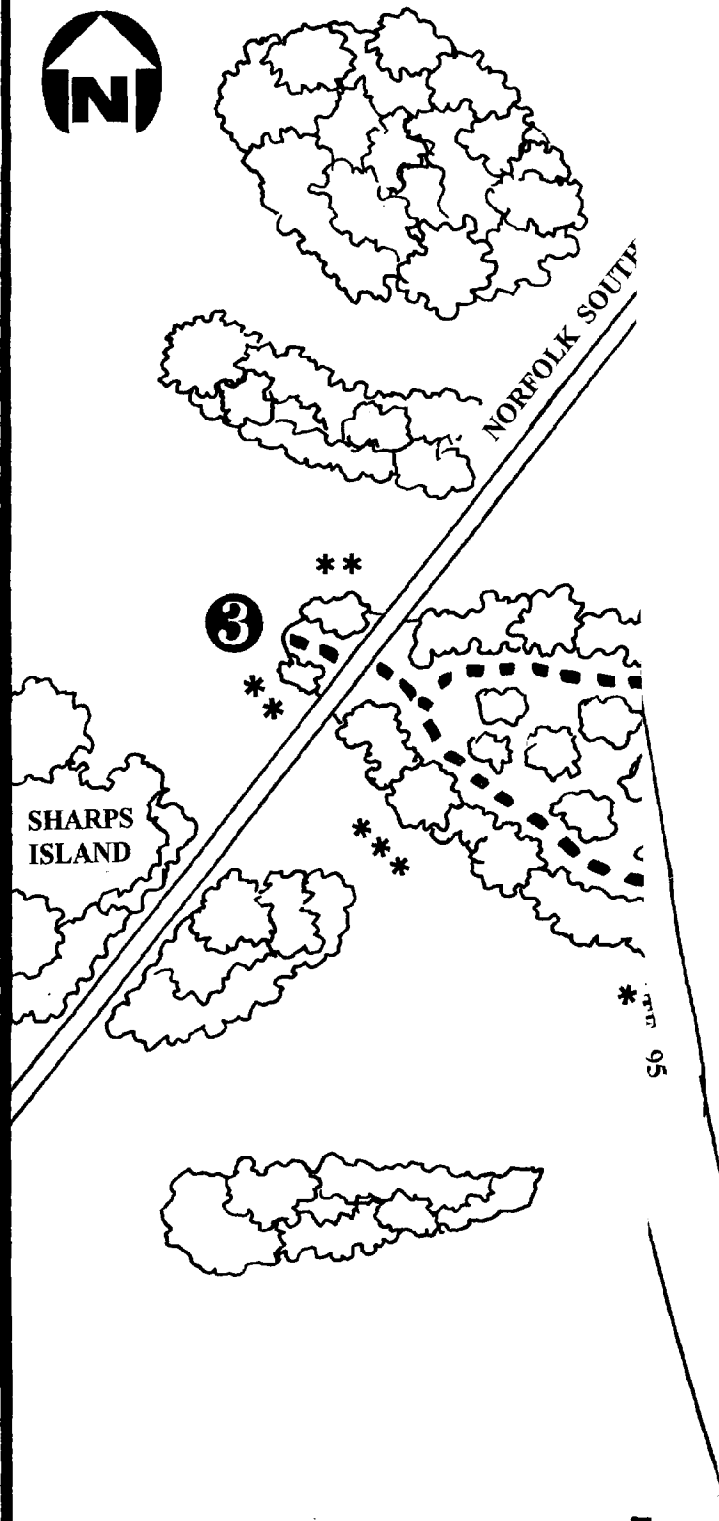
MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION

10. Provide Public Transportation

Mayo's Island should be served by bus and possibly the rubber tired trolley that used to operate downtown. Both bus and trolley service would make it easier for people to reach the island, especially those who do not have a vehicle or who choose not to drive. The trolley could connect Mayo's Island with the proposed transportation center at Main Street Station, downtown businesses, hotels and offices and possibly the offices on the Manchester side of the river. Bus and trolley service to the island could reduce the need for parking.







11. Use the Island for Special Events

Mayo's Island could be use for concerts, festivals and river oriented outdoor events such as fishing contests. Figure 5 shows the area suggested for special events.



MAYO'S ISLAND CONCEPTUAL PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

LEGEND

- Trail/Path  Vegetation
-  Parking Areas  Satellite Parking
-  Picnic Area with picnic tables and trash receptacles
-  Bank Fishing  Traffic Light
- ① Perimeter Trail - wheel chair accessible - crosses under Mayo's Bridge on island's southern side.
- ② Observation Point - wheel chair accessible.
- ③ Trail/Access to western tip of the island, providing fishing access to a portion of the southern bank and access to the water. While not a formalized boat access, can be used for canoe/kayak take-out.
- ④ Recycling Center.
- ⑤ Trail/Access to western tip of the island, providing fishing access to a portion of the southern bank and access to the water. While not a formalized boat access, can be used for canoe/kayak/raft take-out and put-in.
- ⑥ North Access Point to the water for fishing and hand carried boats such as canoes, kayaks and rafts. The fishing pier located parallel to the bank can be reached by the boat access. Wheel chair accessible.
- ⑦ South Access Point to the water for fishing and hand carried boats such as canoes, kayaks, rafts, racing sculls and perhaps jon boats. The fishing pier located parallel to the bank can be reached by the boat access. Wheel chair accessible.
- ⑧ T-Shaped Building which could be used as a boating center and for classes, bait and tackle shop, restrooms and a public safety unit.
- ⑨ The 501 South 14th Street Building which could potentially be used for a restaurant.
- ⑩ Lawn area for special events, concerts, and festivals. Picnic tables could also be located in this area.

Scale: 1" = 200'

Prepared by JRH Associates

Figure 5

B. POTENTIAL WAYS OF PROVIDING PUBLIC ACCESS

There are several methods available to the City of Richmond and the Recreation and Park Foundation to keep all or most of Mayo's Island as open space and available for public access.

1. Direct Acquisition by Purchase or Donation

Fee simple ownership by the City or foundation is the simplest way to assure that the island will be accessible to all citizens in perpetuity. The owning agency would have control of the land and remaining improvements allowing for development of plans to include the island as part of a larger, connected river front and open space. Potential types of direct acquisition include:

- **Purchase:** In this case the City would purchase the property from the current owners at the full market value. However, capital funds for park land acquisition are minimal if not non-existent in the City's current and future budgets.
- **Bargain Sale Purchase:** The entire island is or parts of it are purchased at a price well below current market value. If the Recreation and Parks Foundation (Foundation), a 501(C)3 tax exempt entity, purchased the property, the seller may take a charitable contribution deduction for the difference between the full market value and the actual sales price. We recommend that the Foundation work with an organization like the Trust for Public Land to handle the purchase and hold the land until funds can be raised by the Foundation and the City to purchase the Island.
- **Donation:** This is the simplest and best method for the City or Foundation and provides the greatest tax benefits to the donating landowners. This course should be pursued, but will probably be a more successful method on the smaller, adjacent islands which have little or no development potential.
- **Remainder interest with reserved life estate:** This is a legally recorded transfer of title that would give the owner lifetime rights to use the land. This enables the landowner to take a charitable tax deduction at the time of the transfer. This option could possibly be attractive to the owner of the property leased to the recycling operation, allowing him to continue to enjoy the lease income from the recycling operation.

2. Land Exchange, Lease and Joint Development

- **Land Exchange:** Under this method, the City and the Foundation would offer to exchange other City owned property to the current landowners for all or portions of Mayo's Island.

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION

This method was suggested by one of the landowners prior to his decision to sell his property.

- **Lease:** The City and/or the Foundation could lease certain portions of the island or rights thereto for public access. This lease should be long term (20 years or more) and include an option of first refusal to purchase any or all of the island from the landowner(s) or lessee. It would mean that the City's Department of Recreation and Parks would assume the maintenance and policing responsibilities for the leased portion.
- **Joint Development:** With recent changes in ownership of the island and current plans to create recreational uses for most of it, joint development may be a viable alternative. The key to a joint development arrangement would be a long term agreement between the present landowners and the City of Richmond setting forth the specific responsibilities of each party, a guarantee of public access and a right of first refusal to the City in the event the owner chooses to sell.

Advantages to the City and the public in joint development include having access to Mayo's Island and the James River without a large initial capital outlay and possibly sooner than if the City were to buy and develop the property by itself. Advantages to the landowners and lessees include having the resources and expertise of the City to develop perimeter trails, access points and to act as a conduit for funds from state and federal sources. Also, general upkeep, maintenance and security would be better, making the entire island more attractive to users. A joint development arrangement would require a definite commitment of additional operating monies by the City's Department of Recreation and Parks.

C. FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

Mayo's Island is privately owned, but there are opportunities for future public use of the island for open space and recreation. The current fee simple owners are aware that this study of the island for future open space and recreation uses is underway. In fact, they were informed of the study when it began and were invited to attend the January 31, 1996 Workshop and a subsequent meeting on February 23, 1996.

Potential funding options for Mayo's Island include:

- Direct purchase of the entire Island from its current owners by the City.
- Purchase of portions of the island, especially the western portion from Mayo's Bridge to the upstream tip.
- Long term lease of all or portions of the island by the City for public access and recreation.

MAYO'S ISLAND EVALUATION

- Purchase or lease of all or part of the island by a separate park authority or foundation whose specific purpose is to develop and maintain Mayo's Island as a public park with public and private concessions.

Discussions with private funding sources makes it clear that the City of Richmond must fund at least a portion of the purchase price of Mayo's Island. Matching funds are potentially available from foundations and organizations like the Trust for Public Land, but these sources require that the benefitting municipality or foundation make the initial investment.

There is some indication by City officials that some funds may be available for purchase of park land, specifically Mayo's Island, but these funds are limited.

In our opinion, the answer to funding lies in a combination of methods, each requiring cooperative partnerships. The City's Department of Recreation and Parks must be a primary player since the long term development and maintenance will fall within that agency's responsibilities. However, the Department is currently under funded for its essential operations, making additional purchases and subsequent upkeep questionable if not unfeasible. There must be a commitment from the City administration and City Council to acquire and maintain open space within the City, specifically along the James River.

As a non-profit, the Recreation and Parks Foundation is the logical entity to lead the effort to acquire funds from private sources - individuals, corporations and foundations - to purchase, and, where appropriate, provide maintenance funds for new parks and open spaces in the City. The Foundation needs the financial and administrative support of the City, specifically the Department of Recreation and Parks for several years. Also, the Foundation must strengthen its governing Board by including more influential members of means.

A possible source of future funds for land purchases and maintenance reserves for parks could be from the sale of surplus City-owned property. Now, both real and personal surplus property proceeds are returned to the City's General Fund. It would be a help if only 25 percent of these funds could statutorily be designated for the City of Richmond's to acquire and maintain parks and open space.

With a combination of City Capital Funds and private donations designated for the purchase of Mayo's Island, and possibly adjoining islands, proposals to private land trusts for matching funds should be made. A combination of City capital funds and private donations raised by the Recreation and Parks Foundation for the purchase of Mayo's Island and possibly some of the adjoining islands could be used to attract matching funds from private trusts such as The Trust for Public Land.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Mayo's Island has the potential to become the focal point for recreational and open space access to the fall line of the James River in downtown Richmond. Its size, location, and access offer the best opportunities for both active and passive uses, combined with modest economic development.

There is a unique blend of natural space close to downtown and nearby neighborhoods, easily reached by intermodal means. The adjacent smaller islands offer complementary scenic vistas, habitat and recreation potential, accessible from north and south.

Mayo's Island can be linked to the floodwall, downtown, Church Hill, Ancarrow's Landing, Gillies Creek, Brown's Island and Belle Isle by existing and easily developed trails for hiking and biking. Mayo's Island is the only island in the metro Richmond area that is accessible at grade by automobile and other intermodal means. This feature makes the island especially attractive for recreational use by all, regardless of economic means or mobility.

Restoring most of the surface of Mayo's Island to a natural condition will be beneficial to wildlife, reduce runoff and present a more pleasing environment for public use. This can be accomplished without unduly restricting reasonable development of trails, access to the water, concert and entertainment areas and support facilities in existing buildings.

Mayo's Island presents an opportunity for the City of Richmond that should be pursued. Public ownership of the property would be preferable but a long term lease assuring public use with an option to purchase from the existing owners is a reasonable alternative. Whichever course is taken, it is in the best public interest to proceed with negotiations and proposals as soon as possible. Richmond's downtown riverfront future should include Mayo's Island as a critical and important component.

NOAA COASTAL SERVICES CTR LIBRARY



3 6668 1411982 8

